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The Naturalisation of the Supernatural

By

Frank Podmore

Author of

Modern Spiritualism—A History and a Criticism; Studies in Psychical Research; Apparitions and Thought Transference, etc.

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PREFATORY NOTE

THE illustrative narratives quoted in the following pages are selected partly from the *Proceedings*, but mainly from the unpublished *Journal* of the Society for Psychical Research. I desire to acknowledge the courtesy which has placed these materials at my disposal.

F. P.

OCTOBER, 1907.

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The Naturalisation of the Supernatural

THE NATURALISATION OF THE SUPERNATURAL

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

It has been widely felt that the present is an opportune time for making an organised and systematic attempt to investigate that large group of debatable phenomena designated by such terms as mesmeric, psychical, and spiritualistic.

From the recorded testimony of many competent witnesses, past and present, including observations recently made by scientific men of eminence in various countries, there appears to be, amid much delusion and deception, an important body of remarkable phenomena, which are prima facie inexplicable on any generally recognised hypothesis, and which, if incontestably established, would be of the highest possible value.

The task of examining such residual phenomena has often been undertaken by individual effort, but never hitherto by a scientific society organised on a sufficiently broad basis.

The above extract from the original prospectus of the Society for Psychical Research, issued in 1882, shows the spirit in which it entered on its investigations, the aim which it set before itself, and the methods by which it was proposed to pursue this aim.

The title which I have chosen for the present book, "The Naturalisation of the Supernatural," describes in popular language the object aimed at. The facts which the Society proposed to investigate stood, and some still stand, as aliens, outside the realm of organised knowledge. It proposed to examine their claim to be admitted within the pale. And it is important to recognise that whether we found ourselves able to accept the credentials of these postulants for recognition, or whether we felt ourselves compelled to reject them as undesirables, the aim which the Society set before itself would equally be fulfilled. In undertaking the enquiry we did not assume to express any opinion beforehand on the value of the evidence to be examined. Whatever the present bias of individual members towards belief or disbelief, it will not, I think, be charged against us, by any one who dispassionately studies the results published in the earlier volumes of the *Proceedings* and in the book, *Phantasms of the Living*, in which the case for telepathy was first set before the public, that any private prepossessions were allowed to pervert the methods of the enquiry. To ascertain the facts of the case, at whatever cost to established opinions and prejudices, has been the consistent aim of the Society and its workers. If some of our investigations have resulted in the detection of imposture, the discovery of unsuspected fallacies of sense and memory, and the general disintegration of some imposing structures built upon too narrow foundations; whilst

others have revealed the occurrence of phenomena which neither chance nor fraud nor fallacy of sense can plausibly explain, and for which the present scientific synthesis has as yet found no place, it is pertinent to remember that the investigators have been the same, the methods pursued the same, and the object in all cases was simply the discovery of the truth.

There is another point to be made clear. The prospectus just cited speaks of an "organised and systematic" investigation. It was characteristic of the Society in the first few years that its methods of work were elaborated and the canons of evidence laid down in committee; and that the greater part of the actual work, whether of experimental investigation or merely of weighing and analysing reports made by contributors, was again done in concert. It may be admitted that the leading investigators were attracted to the enquiry mainly in the hope of finding empirical evidence for the existence of the soul after death. So long as the collection and appraisal of evidence was a joint work, there were no grounds for thinking that the existence of this hope in any way biassed our reception of the evidence or the scope of the conclusions based upon it. But after the preliminary survey which occupied the first few years of the Society's existence, the need for concerted action was no longer so urgently felt. Different portions of the field attracted different workers; and the results of individual investigations in the outlying regions show

marked divergences of opinion. Wherever this divergence exists, I shall endeavour to sum up the evidence as fairly as I can: but it must be remembered that the conclusions set down are my own, for which my colleagues are in no way responsible.

Another misconception of the nature of our work should perhaps be referred to. It is objected, of recent years, by some scientific critics that the Society for Psychical Research has no justification for its existence. Some of the phenomena which it investigates, say these critics, are subject-matter for the psychologist or the physicist; the remainder can be left to the police court. The best justification for our work is that it is now possible for such a contention to be put forward. Twenty-five years ago the psychologist and the physicist showed no eagerness to come forward; and even the interference of the police court was intermittent, and frequently ill advised. The phenomena which we have investigated have proved no doubt to be heterogeneous, but until they were investigated their relations could not be discovered. It is obvious now that some of them can be subsumed under existing branches of science. But, to take an illustration, until some disposition is shown by medical men or professional psychologists to undertake the task of investigating the hallucinations of the sane, it is surely premature to brand the investigators of the Society for Psychical Research as usurpers. A brief survey, however, of what has

actually been done will make the position clearer. The phenomena to be investigated by the Society were roughly classified in 1882 under five heads:

1. An examination of the nature and extent of any influence which may be exerted by one mind upon another, apart from any generally recognised mode of perception.

2. The study of hypnotism, and the forms of so-called mesmeric trance, with its alleged insensibility to pain; clairvoyance, and other allied phenomena.

3. A critical revision of Reichenbach's researches with certain organisations called "sensitive," and an inquiry whether such organisations possess any power of perception beyond a highly exalted sensibility of the recognised sensory organs.

4. A careful investigation of any reports, resting on strong testimony, regarding apparitions at the moment of death, or otherwise, or regarding disturbances in houses reputed to be haunted.

5. An inquiry into the various physical phenomena commonly called spiritualistic; with an attempt to discover their causes and general laws.

The inquiry under heading 3 proved inconclusive: but there seems now little room for doubt that the phenomena reported by Reichenbach were due in the main to unconscious suggestion, a fruitful and until recent years insufficiently recognised source of error in all investigations in this obscure region. The inquiries under headings 1, 4, and 5 are still proceeding; and the results so far reached will be set forth in the chapters which follow. But the study of hypnotism (2) has been practically abandoned of recent years by the lay members of

the S. P. R., precisely because it has been claimed by medical men, who both by their education and their opportunities are better qualified for its prosecution. But in 1882 no English doctor who cared for his reputation had a good word to say for hypnotism; and on the continent its chief, almost its only exponent was Liébeault, an obscure practitioner in a small provincial town. The attitude of the scientific world to the subject may be inferred from the fact that in drafting the Society's prospectus it was thought necessary to class hypnotism amongst "debatable phenomena," and to write, a generation after Esdaile and Braid, of the "alleged insensibility to pain" in the "mesmeric" trance. That within the last decade or so the facts of hypnotism have begun to find acceptance with British medical men is no doubt partly due to the experimental work begun by Edmund Gurney and the writings of Frederic Myers, and later to the adoption of hypnotic suggestion in medical practice by Dr. Milne Bramwell, Dr. Lloyd Tuckey, and other members of the Society.

The investigations under headings 1, 4, and 5 of the prospectus are, as already said, still proceeding. And in the course of its existence the Society has found many subjects to investigate of a cognate character, though not actually included in the original scheme. A committee of the Society, for instance, of which Dr. Hodgson was the leading member, examined and exposed the pretended marvels of Mme. Blavatsky and the early Theo-

sophists, and Professor Barrett has by his exhaustive researches made out a strong case for the use of the divining-rod in finding underground water. But the most important of the investigations undertaken by the Society is that connected with Thought Transference, or Telepathy, as it has been happily named by the late F. W. H. Myers. The subject is important because of its wide scope; if the principle of a new mode of communication is once accepted an extensive range of phenomena can be explained. It is important also, as will be shown below, because of its possible implications.

The belief in telepathy has, it should be premised, a distinguished pedigree—a pedigree which it shares with the doctrine of gravitation. It is as old as the days when Chaldean shepherds, watching the stars by night, essayed to read therein the revelation of the Divine Will and to forecast the destiny of human kind. From these nightly vigils came the fruitful conception of an invisible influence radiating from the heavenly bodies—an influence potent for good and evil, yet transcending the limitations of mortal senses. At the hands of the later alchemists—Paracelsus and his successors—this conception received a remarkable extension. Not the stars only, but all substances in the universe, they taught, radiate influence and receive influence in turn. Especially was this true of man, for man is the true microcosm—"Man containeth in himself," says Fludd, "no otherwise his heavens, circles, poles, and stars than the great world doth."

Man, above all other substances, and above all other living things, was perpetually acting upon his fellows by means of this invisible effluence.

> Star vibrates light to star, may soul to soul
> Strike through some finer element of her own.

This natural action and reaction could, the alchemists taught, be strengthened in particular cases by the exercise of will-power, by the practice of medicine, and by magical arts. "By the magic power of the will," Paracelsus writes, "a person on this side of the ocean may make a person on the other side hear what is said on this side . . . the ethereal body of a man may know what another man thinks at a distance of 100 miles and more." A later mystic, the Scottish physician Maxwell, asserts that the physician who has learnt to influence his patient's vital spirits can cure that patient's disease at any distance by invoking the aid of the universal spirit.

This conception of an influence which emanates from all things in the universe, but from human bodies in particular, was popularised by that genius among quacks, Franz Antoine Mesmer. Many of Mesmer's followers in France, Germany, and England proved, or thought they proved, that there did indeed radiate such an invisible healing effluence from the mesmerist to his patient. The proof was chiefly exhibited in the power of the mesmerist—or hypnotiser, as we should now call him—to send his subject into the trance or to

cause him, by mere force of will, to approach from a distance.

A very curious result of this supposed reciprocal influence of mesmerist and subject was demonstrated in the forties by some of our English mesmerists. The entranced subject, it was shown, would frequently be able to share the sensations of his mesmerist, to taste what he was eating, or to feel what he was feeling. The manifestations of this curious faculty—the existence of which, whatever its explanation, has been confirmed by later experiment—are sometimes extremely ludicrous. In the hypnotic sleep it is as a rule quite easy to make the subject insensible to pain. I have seen a youth in this condition who suffered gladly the most injurious attacks upon his own person—who would allow his hair to be pulled, his ears pinched, his fingers even to be scorched by lighted matches. But the same youth would the next moment indignantly resent the slightest injury inflicted upon his hypnotiser, who would all the time be standing at the other end of the room.

Professor Barrett was in the present generation the first to reproduce experimental results similar to those recorded by Elliotson and his contemporaries, and his lead has since been followed by many others. But the later experiments have been conducted under much stricter conditions. It is comparatively easy to exclude deliberate fraud: the real difficulty lies in the fact that the hypnotic subject—and experiments of this kind are found to

succeed best with hypnotised persons—is extremely susceptible to suggestion of any kind. And his susceptibility is frequently increased by hyperæsthesia of the special senses, especially the sense of hearing. The strictest precautions are necessary, therefore, in all experiments conducted at close quarters, to ensure that no information shall reach him through the look, the gesture, or even the breathing of the bystander. In the cases cited in the next chapter the conditions of the experiment have been briefly indicated, but the reader is in all cases recommended to study the fuller records given in the publications of the Society.

There remains the question as to the nature of the transmission. When I tell a piece of news to a friend, a psychical state in me produces a corresponding psychical state in him. But we recognise that the psychical process proceeds *pari passu* with a physical process. The tension in my nerve centres provokes to action my organs of speech, which give rise to aerial waves, which in turn produce a physical change in my friend's ears and so ultimately in his brain. Can any corresponding chain of physical causation be traced when the news is conveyed telepathically? So far as the experiments at close quarters are concerned, when the two parties are separated by a few feet or yards only, there is no difficulty in conceiving that the entire process may be susceptible of expression in physical terms. We have at either end of the

chain a physical event—the changes in the cerebral tissues which are presumed to correspond to every act of thought or sensation. And it is not without interest to note in this connection that the arrangement of some of the nerve cells in the brain bears a superficial resemblance to the arrangement of the particles in the "coherer" used for the reception of the message in wireless telegraphy. Again,

> Röntgen has familiarised us [says Sir William Crookes] with an order of vibrations of extreme minuteness compared with the smallest waves with which we have hitherto been acquainted, and of dimensions comparable with the distances between the centres of the atoms of which the material universe is built up: and there is no reason to suppose that we have here reached the limit of frequency. It is known that the action of thought is accompanied by certain molecular movements in the brain, and here we have physical vibrations capable from their extreme minuteness of acting direct on individual molecules, while their rapidity approaches that of the internal and external movements of the atoms themselves.[1]

No such connection between thinking brains has been proved of course; but we have here a mechanism apparently sufficient for the purpose: sufficient at any rate to meet the objection urged by some that the establishment of telepathy would dislocate our entire conception of the physical universe. Nor does the fact that only certain persons, apparently, are affected by the telepathic impulse present any serious difficulty. For the brain of both agent and

[1] Presidential address to the British Association, Sept., 1898.

percipient may conceivably, on the analogy of wireless telegraphy, be set to transmit and receive only vibrations of a certain amplitude. A more formidable objection is found in the action of the force at a distance. For successful experiment, it seems necessary, in most cases, that the two parties should be in the same room. In a few experimental cases, however, as we shall see, the distance over which the transmission must be presumed to have operated extends to twenty miles or more. And in some of the best evidenced cases of spontaneous apparitions the agent and percipient were half the world apart.[1] If, however, the transmission is effected by ethereal vibrations, the force diminishing, as in the case of other physical energies, in the ratio of the square of the distance, it is difficult to conceive how an impulse which in some of our experiments can barely produce its effect at a distance of a few yards, should even under the most favourable circumstances, when the disturbance is presumably of a much more massive character, prove sufficiently intense to bridge a gulf of thousands of miles. Sir W. Crookes hazards the suggestion that "intense thought concentrated towards a sensitive with whom the thinker is in close sympathy may induce a telepathic chain of brain waves along which the message of thought can go straight to its goal without loss of energy due to distance."[2] But he

[1] See, *e. g.*, case No. 37 where the agent was in Dublin and the percipient in Tasmania.

[2] *Proceedings*, S. P. R., vol. xii., p. 352.

indicates that the suggestion is almost a forlorn hope by asking further—"Is it inconceivable that our mundane ideas of space and distance may be superseded in these subtile regions of unsubstantial thought where 'near' and 'far' may lose their usual meaning?" The difficulty is indeed so great as to induce some thinkers to suggest that the psychical process may be without a physical parallel—that the connection between the two psychical states may conceivably be found in the psychical world alone.[1]

But after all such a conclusion rests entirely upon a negation—our present inability to conceive of an explanation. And that inability the progress of scientific research may at any time remove, as has happened again and again in the past in the case of similar problems which at one time seemed equally secure against explanation in physical terms. The phenomena of animal life were not so very long ago held to stand outside the physical world: the very substances of which our tissues are composed were supposed to owe some of their physical properties to a principle of vitality. But chemists can now build up, out of the bricks and mortar of the dead world, many of these once mysterious organic compounds. They have not yet, it is true, built up

[1] This was, so far as I can gather, the view held by Mr. Myers (see *Human Personality*, especially vol. i., p. 8, "this direct and supersensuous communion of mind with mind"). See also Report of the Committee on the Census of Hallucinations (*Proceedings*, vol. x., p. 27) and the Presidential address to the Society by Mr. A. J. Balfour, *Proceedings*, vol. x., p. 9–11.

the cathedral of life, even in the humblest protozoön; but all architects must have time to learn their trade. Again, the activities of man, especially those activities which are accompanied by consciousness and will, were also for long thought to be outside the physical world. But the case is so far altered that the burden of proof is now shifted to the other side. The philosopher who claims to interpolate a psychical link in the chain of physical processes which connects nerve-stimulus with action has to meet the challenge of the physiologist.

We have grounds for hoping, then, that, if we are content to wait, the difficulties in the way of a physical explanation of telepathy may ultimately diminish. And meanwhile the hypothesis of telepathy is in no worse case than is, or was until recently,[1] the hypothesis of gravitation. The energy which causes weight conforms to the law of the inverse square; but the only physical explanations of its action which have been suggested are so cumbrous and involve such large assumptions as to be little more than curiosities of speculation. On the other hand, we have little difficulty in conceiving of a mechanism by which telepathy could operate; the difficulty is to account for the energy not diminishing more rapidly as the distance increases. But, after all, is it inconceivable that the energy, when it is liberated under the most favourable cir-

[1] Possibly the recent discovery that atoms are not *atomic*, and that their constituent parts may, under certain circumstances, move freely through space, may facilitate the acceptance of a corpuscular theory of gravitation.

cumstances, may suffice to produce the effects reported in the spontaneous cases referred to?

At any rate we can but wait until the further progress of research, not necessarily in this field alone, may throw some light upon the problem.

CHAPTER II

EXPERIMENTAL THOUGHT TRANSFERENCE

NUMEROUS experiments in the transmission of ideas and sensations have been carried on during the twenty-five years which have elapsed from the foundation of the Society for Psychical Research, by committees of the Society, by individual members or groups of members, and by various Continental students of the subject. Records of many of them will be found scattered through the Society's *Proceedings* and *Journals*. By far the most important of these investigations, however, are those conducted at Brighton by the late Professor and Mrs. Sidgwick, and later by Mrs. Sidgwick and Miss Alice Johnson, assisted by Mr. G. A. Smith, in the years 1889–1891. The percipients were several youths, aged about twenty to twenty-five, and later a young woman employed in a shop.

The experiments were carried on whilst the percipients were in the hypnotic sleep, the hypnotiser and agent being Mr. G. A. Smith. For a full record of the experiments, details of the precautions taken, and an analysis of the answers given, the reader is referred to the articles in *Proceedings*, vols. vi. and viii. It is impossible here to do

more than briefly summarise the conditions and the results.

The main object of the experiments was to determine the fact of the transmission of ideas and sensations by other than the ordinary sensory channels; and for this purpose a form of experiment was chosen which made it possible effectually to eliminate the operation of chance coincidence as an explanation of the results. The effectiveness of the precautions taken to prevent information passing between agent and percipient by normal means will be discussed later. In the main series of experiments a set of small wooden counters, used in a game called Lotto, were employed. The counters, eighty-one in number, bore the numbers from 10 to 90 inclusive, stamped in raised letters on their face. After the subject had been hypnotised, one of the counters was drawn at random from a bag, and handed to Mr. Smith inside a small box, in such a position that it was impossible for the subject, even if his eyes had been open, which was generally not the case, to see it. Mr. Smith—who in the course of the long series of experiments occupied various positions with relation to the subject, sometimes in front, sometimes behind or at the side[1]—would look intently at the number, and the percipient would state his impression. The total number of trials under these conditions with two percipients, young men named P.

[1] The position in each experiment is indicated in the published report.

and T., was 617. The correct number was given in 113 cases, the digits being given, however, in reverse order in 14 out of the 113 cases.[1] If the coincidences were due to chance alone the most probable number would have been 8. That is, it is proved beyond all possibility of doubt that in this particular series of experiments the success attained was due to some definite and uniform cause. In other words, if it can be conclusively shown that the percipient could not have obtained knowledge of the numbers by the ordinary processes of sensation, due allowance being made for the hyperæsthesia, especially of hearing, frequently met with in hypnotised subjects, the results point unmistakably to the existence of some hitherto unrecognised mode of communication. It is this hypothetical mode of communication which has been provisionally named Telepathy or Thought Transference.

It seems certain that the percipients, for the reasons already given, could not have seen the figures. It is not in fact difficult in such experiments to exclude the operation of sight. But it is a much more difficult matter to ensure that a hint of the number chosen shall not be given to the percipient by subconscious whispering or even, conceivably, by rhythmical movements of the agent's body. And the fact that when a curtain was interposed between the agent and percipient, or when they were placed

[1] Further, 9 of the successful cases are recorded as having been "to some extent second guesses."

in separate rooms, success became much more uncertain, and the percipient in some cases received no impression at all, seemed from this point of view extremely suspicious. The actual number of successes obtained under the conditions last named with the best percipient, P., was only 8 out of 139 trials—a number much greater than the probable number if chance alone operated, but proportionately much smaller than the number obtained when the same agent and percipient were together in one room, without any obstacle intervening.[1] With the other percipient, T., only one success was obtained in 79 trials. It became therefore important to determine whether the unsuccessful trials showed any tendency to confuse a number with the number most like it in sound or next in sequence. Thus, if the numbers were subconsciously muttered by the agent we should expect to find that the percipient, when he went wrong, would give 4 for 5, 6 for 7, and *vice versa*. On the other hand, if the agent subconsciously *counted* the numbers, he would obviously count the digits separately, and we should expect to find, in the unsuccessful guesses, traces of miscounting—7 or 9 would be given for 8, etc. In the accompanying analysis of the guesses of one of the percipients on his "successful" days (*i. e.*, the days with at least 3 successes), we find no trace of the operation of either of the suggested causes.

[1] *Proceedings*, S. P. R., vol. vi., p. 155.

Thus, to take as an illustration a digit with which a small degree of success was obtained, 6 was named correctly only 14 times out of 37, but the 21 incorrect guesses are distributed pretty uniformly over all the other digits, from 0 to 9.[1]

P.'s Guesses Alone on Successful Days, Mr. Smith being in the Same Room with Him.

Numbers Drawn.	Numbers Guessed.											Totals drawn.
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0	"No impression"	
1	17	5	4	4	5	1	..	2	2	2	1	43
2	1	14	5	2	..	..	1	3	..	..	..	26
3	2	8	21	3	3	..	3	1	3	..	2	46
4	4	..	6	23	1	3	2	1	3	1	2	46
5	1	2	4	4	16	4	3	5	3	1	3	46
6	2	2	2	4	2	14	2	3	1	3	2	37
7	1	4	1	1	4	4	27	3	..	..	..	45
8	1	1	8	2	3	..	5	20	..	1	3	44
9	..	1	..	1	1	1	1	2	12	1	1	21
0	2	4	1	2	2	1	2	..	..	8	..	22
Total guess'd	31	41	52	46	37	28	46	40	24	17	14	376

It is scarcely conceivable, if the successful results were actually due to hearing a faint whisper or other intimation under conditions of extreme diffi-

[1] *Proceedings*, S. P. R., vol. vi., p. 166.

culty, that the failures should not show some clear indications of imperfect hearing.[1]

Nevertheless it seemed desirable on all accounts to have further trials with the agent and percipient in different rooms. The experiments were accordingly continued in the following year, 1890. Two hundred and fifty-two trials were made with Miss B. at a distance from the agent, Mr. Smith. In 148 of these trials Miss B. was placed in an upper

[1] So far as I am aware the only serious criticism of the results quoted is that which is contained in an article by Messrs. Hansen and Lehmann of Copenhagen, published some ten years ago (*Wundt's Phil. Studien*, vol. xi., pt. 4). The authors show that it is possible for information to be conveyed from one person to another by whispering with *closed lips*—a possibility of which the experimenters in 1889 were not aware. Messrs. Lehmann and Hansen made a series of experiments in the transference of numbers under these conditions, the one acting as "agent," the other as "percipient." As a substitute for the hyperæsthesia commonly found in hypnotised subjects, the Danish experimenters placed their heads in the foci of two concave spherical mirrors, the distance between the foci being two metres. Under these conditions they attained considerable success. They argued, further, that their failures showed such remarkable correspondences with the failures in the Sidgwick experiments—part of which are given in the table quoted in the text—as to suggest a common cause for the two sets of results. Professor Sidgwick (*Proceedings*, vol. xii., pp. 298–315) has examined very closely the arguments of the Danish investigators. The question of unconscious whispering, he points out, had been expressly considered, and the reasons for believing that it had not operated given in full. The attempt of the Danish investigators to show a correspondence between the results obtained by them and those obtained by the S. P. R. investigators breaks down. As a matter of fact the correspondences are not more numerous than those obtained by pure chance. Professor Lehmann himself has since admitted the force of Sidgwick's counter-argument, and agrees that his theory is not yet established (see his letter to Professor W. James, quoted in the *Journal*, S. P. R., 1899, p. 115). In any case it must be admitted that it would be extremely difficult to explain by a combination of unconscious whispering and hyperæsthesia of hearing the results quoted below, in which agent and percipient were in different rooms, with door or ceiling intervening.

room, Mr. Smith being in the lower room, separated from the room above by a match-board ceiling and a wooden flooring covered with a thick Axminster carpet. In 148 trials there were 20 complete successes. Thirty-three trials with the positions reversed yielded no success. In 71 further trials Mr. Smith was seated in the passage in Mrs. Sidgwick's lodgings in Brighton, Miss Johnson sitting between him and the closed door. Miss B. was in the room at a total distance from the agent varying from 12 to 17 feet. Under these conditions 7 complete successes were obtained.[1]

Thus in 252 trials there were 27 complete successes—a number, of course, far beyond the possible scope of chance. But 146 trials during the same period with Miss B. and Mr. Smith in the same room showed 26 complete successes. Clearly therefore the slight difference in conditions materially affected the results. In view of the startling results obtained over much greater distances in some later experiments, and in the cases of spontaneous telepathy to be quoted hereafter, it is difficult to understand how a slight increase in distance, or the interposition of such obstacles as ceilings and doors, could really prejudice the physical process of transmission. The explanation of the difficulty is possibly, as Mrs. Sidgwick suggests, to be sought

[1] *Proceedings*, S. P. R., vol. viii., p. 540. In all the cases quoted I have for the sake of simplicity omitted to give the cases in which one digit only was correctly named and in its right order. The complete successes show such overwhelming odds against chance alone as the cause, that the addition of these partial successes would hardly add anything to the demonstration.

in the psychological conditions. On the one hand, the parties to the experiments, because of the novel conditions, were probably not so sanguine of success. On the other hand, the greater tediousness of experiments conducted under such conditions would be likely to operate unfavourably. It must be recorded that in nearly four hundred trials with the same percipient, Miss B., the agent being in another house, or separated from the percipient by two closed doors and a passage, practically no success was obtained.[1]

Another series of experiments conducted during the same period by Mrs. Sidgwick and Miss Johnson is valuable as illustrating the transference of a complicated impression—an imaginary scene. The general conditions were the same as in the experiments already described. The subject of the picture would be selected by one of the experimenters and communicated in writing to Mr. Smith who would then visualise the idea suggested. The other experimenter, who would as a rule be left in ignorance of the subject chosen, would sit by the percipient and, if necessary, question him on what he saw. One of the most successful percipients was P., the young man already referred to. Two illustrations may be quoted. The first experiment was made on July 9, 1891.

No. 1

P.'s eyes were not opened and he was told that what he would

[1] *Proceedings*, S. P. R., vol. viii., p. 547.

see would be a magic-lantern picture. (This idea was suggested to us by Whybrew, who had imagined earlier in the same day that he was seeing magic-lantern pictures when Mr. Smith was trying to transfer mental pictures to him.) Mr. Smith made him see the sheet and then went down-stairs with Miss Johnson and was asked by her to think of an *eagle pursuing a sparrow*. Mrs. Sidgwick, who remained upstairs with P., in a few minutes induced him to see a round disk of light on the imaginary lantern sheet and then he saw in it "something like a bird" (?) which disappeared immediately. He went on looking (with closed eyes of course) and presently thought he saw "something like a bird—something like an eagle." After a pause he said: "I thought I saw a figure there —I saw 5. The bird 's gone. I see 5 again, now it 's gone. The bird came twice." Mr. Smith then came up-stairs, and P. had another impression of an eagle. He was told that the eagle was right and there was something else besides, no hint being given of what the other thing was. He then said that the first thing he "saw was a little bird—a sparrow perhaps—he could not say—about the size of a sparrow; then that disappeared and he saw the eagle. He had told Mrs. Sidgwick so at the time."

In the next case, with the same percipient, the desired picture could not be elicited without a small amount of prompting. The subject set to Mr. Smith was "The Babes in the Wood."

No. 2

To begin with P. sat with closed eyes, but when no impression came, Mr. Smith opened his eyes without speaking, and made him look for the picture on a card. After we had waited a little while in vain, Mr. Smith said to him: "Do you see something like a straw hat?" P. assented to this, and then began to puzzle out something more: "A white apron, something dark—a child. It can't be another child, unless

it 's a boy—a boy and a girl—the boy to the right and the girl to the left. Little girl with white socks on, and shoes with straps." Mr. Smith asked: "What are they doing? Is it two children on a raft at sea?" P. "No, it 's like trees in the background—a copse or something. Like a fairy story—like babes in a wood or something."

It is interesting to note, in the last case, that the picture seemed to develop piecemeal, parts of it being seen before their relation to the whole was recognised. This characteristic is more marked in the following case, in which a prominent part of the picture, though, it would seem, distinctly seen, was misinterpreted in the first instance. The percipient in this case was Miss B. The subject set was *a sailing-boat.* Mr. Smith at first sat behind a screen. At a later stage he came and sat near the percipient, but without speaking.

No. 3

Miss Johnson, who did not know what the subject of the picture was, asked Miss B. whether it was anything like an animal. Miss B. said: "No—got some prong-sort of things—something at the bottom like a little boat.—What can that be up in the air?—Cliffs, I suppose—cliffs in the air high up—its joining the boat—oh, sails—a sailing-boat—not cliffs—sails." This was not all uttered consecutively, but partly in answer to questions put by Miss Johnson, but as Miss Johnson was ignorant of the subject of the supposed picture, her questions could of course give no guidance.

In another case, when the subject set was a cow being milked, Miss B. succeeded only in seeing a buffalo! That these imaginary pictures were very

real to the percipients was clearly shown in many instances. Here is an account of one of his visions given by a youth named Whybrew :

No. 4

On July 16th, Mr. Smith himself hypnotised Whybrew, as usual. During the experiment he sat by him, but did not speak to him at all after he knew the subject—*a man with a barrow of fish*—given him by Mrs. Sidgwick. Miss Johnson, not knowing what the subject was, carried on the conversation with Whybrew. He said : "It's the shape of a man. Yes, there's a man there. Don't know him. He looks like a bloke that sells strawberries." Miss Johnson asked : "Are there strawberries there?" Whybrew : "That looks like his barrow there. What's he selling of? I believe he's sold out. I can't see anything on his barrow—perhaps he's sold out. There ain't many—a few round things. I expect they're fruit. Are they cherries? They look a bit red. Are n't they fish? It don't look very much like fish. If they're fish, some of them has n't got any heads on. Barrow is a bit fishified—it has a tray on. What colour are those things on the barrow? They looked red, but now they look silvery."

Whybrew was rather pleased with this picture, and asked afterwards whether it was for sale!

No. 5

The next case may serve to illustrate the danger of excessive culture. The experiment came near to failure because the percipient, a young man named Major, had too lofty a conception of the functions of art. "The subject given was *a mouse in a mouse-trap*. Regarding himself as a man of culture and being generally anxious to ex-

hibit this, Major asked if it was to be an old master or a modern 'pot-boiler.' He was told the latter, and he then discoursed on 'pot-boilers' and how he knew all the subjects of them—mentioning two or three—in a very contemptuous manner. He did not seem to see anything, however, and appeared to be expecting to see an artist producing a rapid sketch. Then, when told that the picture was actually there, he suddenly exclaimed: 'Do you mean that deuced old trap with a mouse? He must have been drawing for the rat-vermin people.'"

Another interesting series of experiments in the transference of imagined scenes is recorded by Mrs. A. W. Verrall, of Cambridge. Mrs. Verrall has conducted many experiments with H., the agent in this case, a child (in 1893) between nine and ten years of age, and has found indications of telepathic powers, both in H. and herself.

No. 6. From Mrs. A. W. Verrall

"In the autumn of 1893 we tried to transfer visualised scenes; in this I believe myself to have had some slight success as percipient with other people. H. and I sat in the same room, at some distance, back to back; she thought of a scene or picture, I looked at the ceiling, described what I saw, and drew it. There was not complete silence, but no leading questions were asked, and very few remarks made. I took down at the time, on one occasion [Experiment (d) given below], every word that was said, and am sure that no sort of hint is given by H., other than the inevitable one of satisfaction or disappointment, of which I am conscious, though it is not expressed. After my description and drawing were complete, H. made rough outlines in some cases

where her description was not definite enough to please her. She did this before seeing my drawings. We have made in all seven attempts, besides two where I had no impression of any kind. Out of these seven, in two cases H.'s visualisation was not clear enough to enable her to draw anything, and in these two cases I failed completely. In one case there may have been a connection between my impression and H.'s mental picture; the four remaining cases I will describe in detail.

(a) My description was as follows:

Darkish centre, perhaps brown; light or white side pieces; like an odd-shaped chandelier or a gigantic white butterfly. Most conspicuous vivid blue background, as if the object were seen against a bright blue sky. My drawing is reproduced on the Plate, marked P. 1.

H.'s picture, in her own words:

Ship leaving Port Gavin, very tall, brown, central mast, white sails—the whole showing against a brilliant blue sea, with dark brown rocks on one side. For H.'s drawing, see Plate, fig. A. 1.

She had seen this on the Cornish coast, when on a visit without me, and had been struck with the beauty of colouring. She was disappointed at my not seeing the rocks.

(b) My description:

Fat insect—no, child—child with its back to me, and arms and legs stretched out; colour reddish brown in the centre; shiny bright head, very solid body. (See Plate, fig. P. 2.)

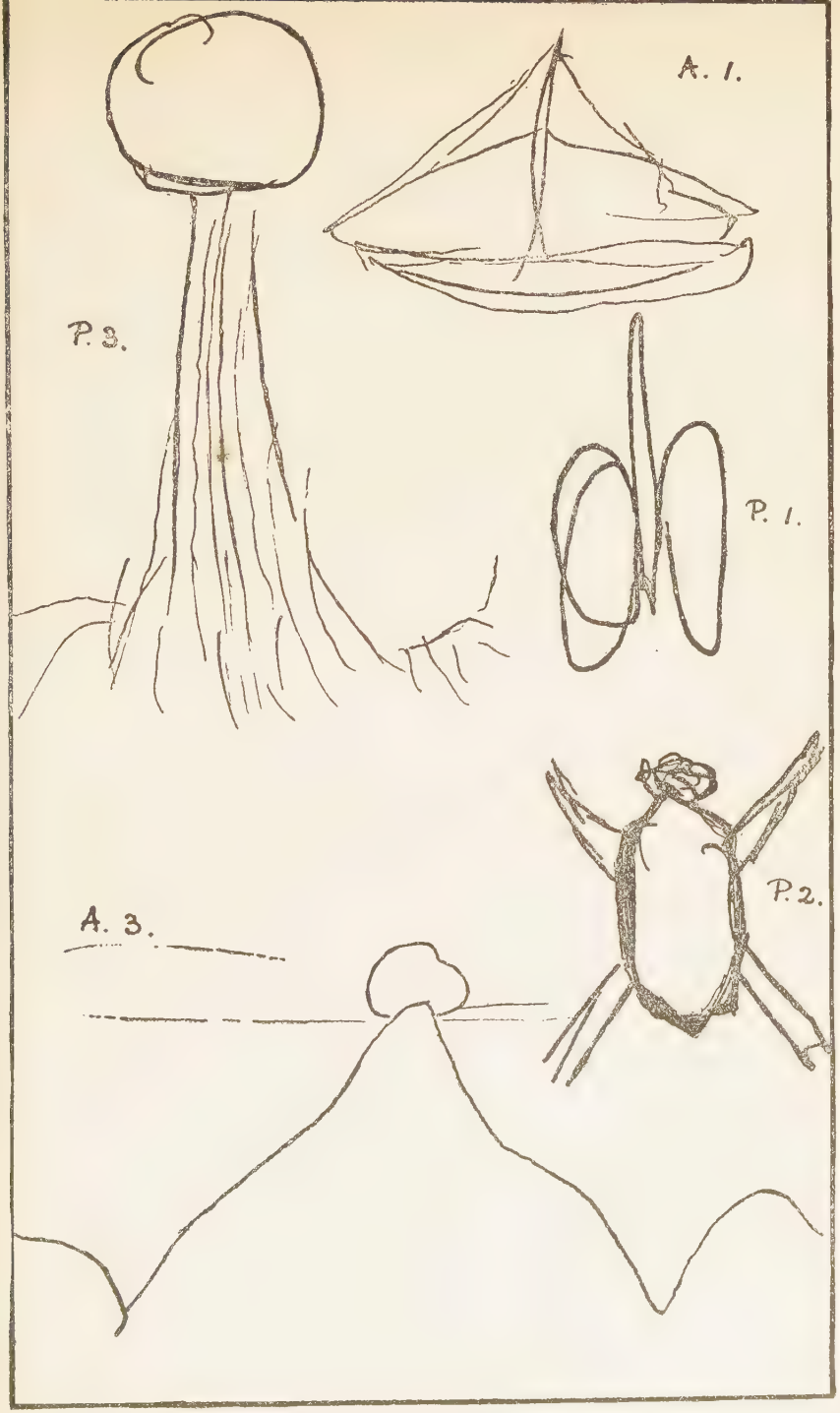
H.'s picture:

Baby—in a passion, standing in the corner with his face to the wall.

The child in question had very shining, bright hair, much brighter, as H. said, than his frock, which was white (not brown). He stood with legs and arms outstretched.

(c) My description:

Large globe on the top of a pillar—base indistinct—cannot see colour of globe; it is light, has reflections, is dazzling and


A. 1.
P. 3.
P. 1.
P. 2.
A. 3.

bright—perhaps an electric light on the top of a pillar. (See Plate, fig. P. 3.)

H.'s picture :

Sun setting behind point of hill, so that a little notch is taken out of the disc of the sun by the point of the hill. The whole scene is distant, lower ranges of hills leading up to the highest, behind this is the setting sun. Mist over the lower part. (See Plate, fig. A. 3.)

(d) My description, verbatim. H.'s comments in italics.

Scene, outdoors—colour, green. *Yes.*

Right hand definite, left hand undefined, *e. g.* on right hand, mountain or hill, line of trees, house. *Which?*

Right hand, hill—green hill, clear outline. Something at bottom of hill, behind it sea—or before it. Purplish flat surface fills middle of picture. Object (at foot of hill) not natural—mechanical, geometrical in outline. *How large?*

Can't see size ; colour, white and red. No horizontal lines ; (lines) vertical and aslant.

H.'s picture :

Dieppe as seen from the steamer (six months before ; H.'s first impression of a French town). Cliff sharply defined on right ; on left, view cut off by the steamer. Red and white houses below the white cliff in the green hill, all seen across a dull bluish sea.

I have given the account of this impression in detail because it illustrates the difficulties which I experience in what I may call interpretation. The objects present themselves to my mind as groups of lines, accompanied by an impression of colour, but there are no external objects for comparison, so that it is difficult to get any notion of their size—and sometimes, as in this last case, they appear in succession, so that even their relative proportions are not easy to determine. The "object at the foot of the hill" seemed to be equally likely to be a house with a red roof and white front, a red waggon with a white load, or a child's white pinafore against a red dress. The only certainties were that the main colours were red and white, and the general trend of the lines vertical and aslant. The

description, is, I think, not inaccurate when referred to the view of Dieppe at the foot of the cliffs. Again, in the third case, it will be seen that in general outlines the two drawings are similar, but I interpreted my impressions on too small a scale when I suggested a globe of electric light carried on a pillar for what was the sun momentarily resting upon the hilltop.[1]

The form of these experiments is open to some objection: and in ordinary cases it might fairly be suspected that the success attained was partly due to verbal indications given by the agent, which had been through forgetfulness omitted from the record. But with an experimenter so scrupulously exact as Mrs. Verrall, I am not disposed to think that allowance of this kind need be made, and it will probably be conceded that the coincidences are too striking to be explained as the result of the natural concurrence of ideas between mother and child.

In the cases quoted of experiments in the transference of imaginary scenes it seems clear that the impression transferred from the agent's mind, however indistinct, has been of a visual character. Sometimes, however, it is the name of the object

[1] *Proceedings*, S. P. R. vol. xi., pp. 180–181. Mrs. Verrall has kindly allowed me to see her original notes of experiment (d) with her rough drawing, made before she learnt from H. the subject set. There is a clear representation of a hill with scarped cliff-like outlines to the right, and at the foot three upright parallel lines, with oblique lines above them; lines representing a flat surface to the left. I may add that Mrs. Verrall has given me an account of the two trials described in the text as complete failures. I should have hesitated to use so strong a term; in one case at least the description of Mrs. Verrall's impression, though vague, seems to me not inconsistent with the scene thought of by the agent.

which apparently forms the basis of the percipient's impression. Well marked instances of this kind of transference will be found in some experiments by Mr. H. G. Rawson.[1] But in experiments of this kind at close quarters it is extremely difficult to ensure that information shall not be conveyed, subconsciously, by muttering or whispering.

For similar reasons I do not think it necessary to quote here any experiments in the transference of sensations of smell or taste; many examples of which are to be found amongst the writings of the earlier mesmerists. A few experiments of the kind are also recorded in our *Proceedings*.

Experiments at a Distance

We have no continued series of experiments at a distance at all comparable in importance to the Brighton experiments at close quarters. But there are several cases where the amount of coincidence seems to be beyond what chance could afford. Dr. A. S. Wiltse, the agent in the following example, has sent us records of a series of experiments made in the course of the year 1892 with Mrs. Wiltse, his young son, and one or two neighbours. These experiments, all at close quarters, showed a considerable proportion of successes. The following is the only experiment made at a distance. One successful experiment had been made with Mr. Raseco as agent in the same room.

[1] *Proceedings*, S. P. R., vol. xi., p. 2.

No. 7. From Dr. Wiltse, Kismet, Morgan Co., Tenn.

Experiment 28 (*Feb., 1891*).

A. S. Wiltse, as agent, attempts to produce a certain image in the mind of T. Raseco, since 10 P.M., distance apart about 200 yards ; both in bed, by appointment, at 9.55 P.M. Agent fixes upon the image he will produce, so that no possible hint may be exchanged. Meeting the next morning, they exchange notes.

Result.—A. S. W. attempted to make T. Raseco see an African jungle, as it would appear at night, with a hunter's tent in front, and a tiger glaring out from the jungle. Percipient to see only the glowing eyes, with ill-defined form back of them.

T. Raseco, the percipient, saw :

A large and dense mass of bushes, apparently rose-bushes, as there seemed an abundant profusion of roses. In the midst of this mass appeared two balls of fire, behind which was an *indistinct bulk which he could not make out.*

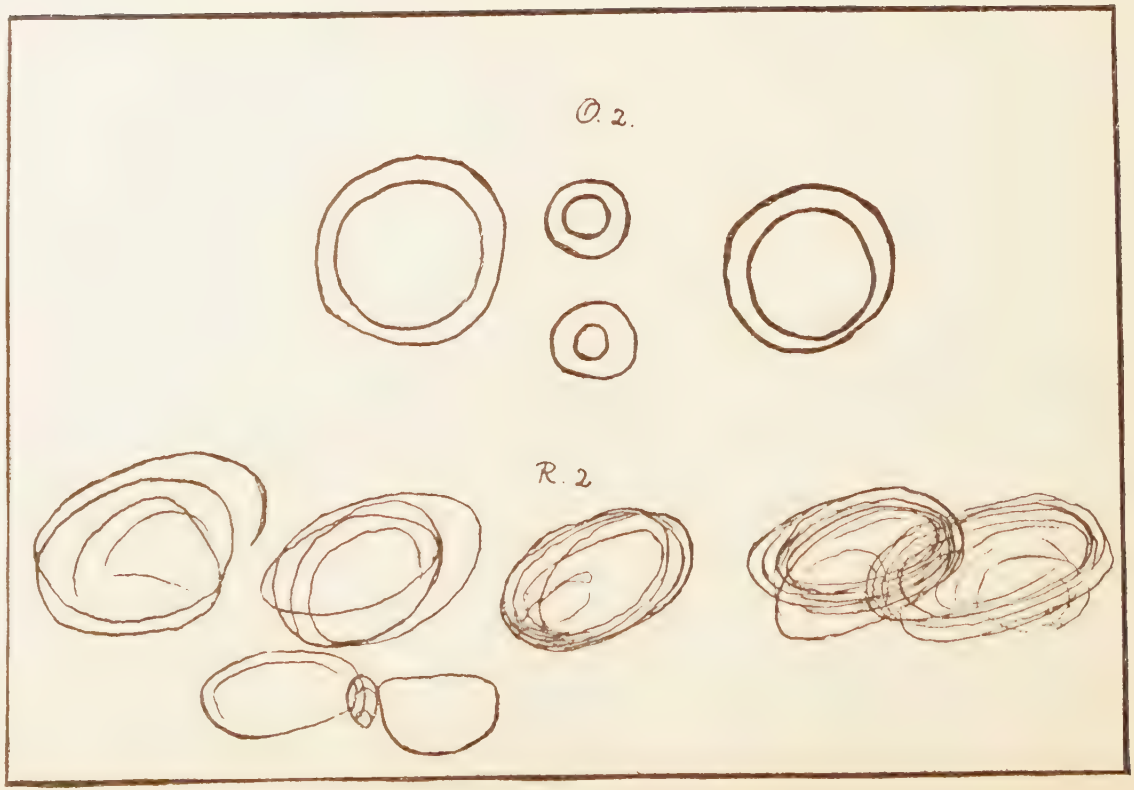
(*Query :* by agent : Why, if the experiment was truly partially successful, as would seem to be the fact, did percipient see roses in place of palms, saw-palms, etc., which were in my mind ?) [1]

The example just quoted was, as said, an isolated case of experiment at a distance. In the following case, however, there was a series of eighteen trials.

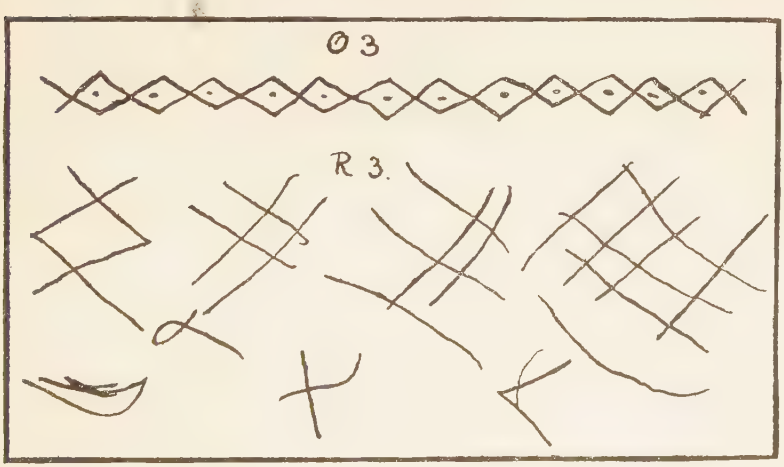
No. 8. From the Rev. A. Glardon

In 1893 and 1894 the Rev. A. Glardon and a friend, Mrs. M., agreed to carry on experiments in the transference of mental pictures at a fixed hour on certain days ; Mr. Glardon being throughout the series in Tour de Peilz, Canton Vaud, and Mrs. M. being first in Florence, then in Torre Pellice, Italy,

[1] *Journal*, S. P. R., Feb., 1896, pp. 199, 200.


O. 2.
R. 2

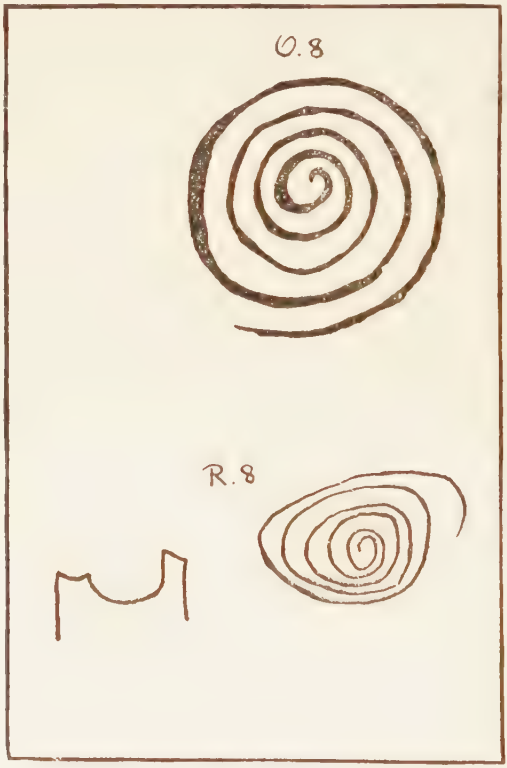
and finally in Corsica. Mr. Glardon at the hour previously arranged would draw a diagram or picture and concentrate his attention on it; the percipient at the same hour would sit, pencil in hand, waiting to receive impressions. In four cases, here reproduced, the percipient's drawing bore a striking resemblance to the original diagram. In several



other cases there was a resemblance, but less marked. The amount of correspondence seems on the whole much beyond what would be produced by mere association of ideas. It should be added that, with one exception, the whole of the drawings made by the percipient on each occasion are reproduced. The exception is the experiment marked 10. The original diagram, as shown, was a Maltese cross

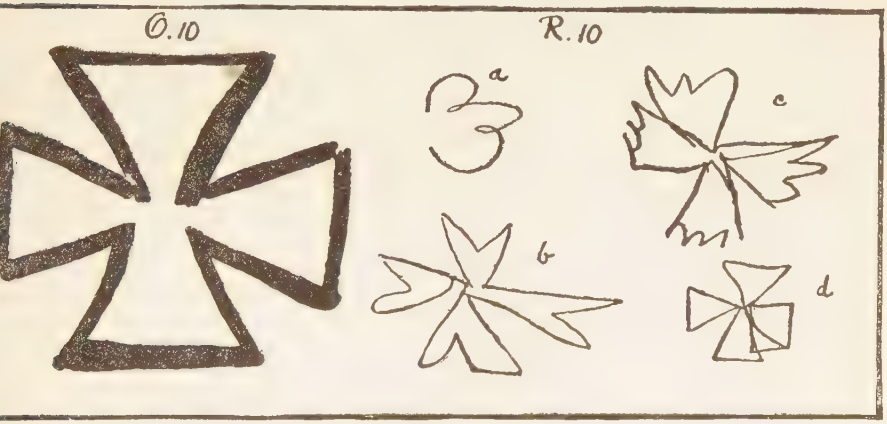
which the agent notes that he used on January 5th and 6th, 1894. The percipient made on January 5th, at 9.30 P.M., four

drawings, of which the one most like a Maltese cross is reproduced as R. 10, a. On January 6th at the same hour, she made four drawings, none of which are at all like the cross. On January 8th, at 9.30 P.M., she made four drawings, the most successful of which is reproduced as R. 10, b. On January 9th,



at 9.30 P.M., she made first two drawings, resembling each other pretty closely, and added the note, "same impression as last time." One of these is reproduced as R. 10, c. She seems then to have gone off on an altogether wrong tack, as nine diagrams of a different character, some of them resembling a

flag or a key, follow. Next she appears to have made a fresh start, drawing three diagrams, one of which is R. 10, d. To these she appends the note : " always come back to the same thing. Probably he has sent nothing." Finally, on one corner of the sheet, she draws a Greek key pattern, marked " afterwards." [1]



The two ladies who conducted the experiments next to be quoted have had considerable success in previous similar trials. It is to be noted that in the first of the two cases quoted the transferred impression, if indeed it may be claimed as "transferred," was wholly auditory—to wit, fragments of the word "candlestick" and the sound of a train. In the second experiment, however, the impression was visual. There were four experiments altogether in this series on four successive nights in December, 1895. In the other two trials the

[1] *Journal*, S. P. R., 1896, pp. 325–328.

objects of the experiments were diagrams. One was a complete failure, the other a partial success.

No. 9.

The agent, Miss Despard, was at Strathmore, Surbiton Hill Park, Surbiton. She began her letter on December 27, 11.30 P.M., and continued it day by day after the conclusion of each trial. It was not actually posted until the 30th, after the conclusion of the series.

11.30 P.M.

DEAR K.,—As you know, we agreed a few days ago to try some experiments in thought-transference—to begin to-night at 11 P.M.—alternate nights to think of an object and a diagram. So to-night I fixed my attention about 11.4 P.M. on a brass candlestick with a lighted candle in it. I feel the result will not be very satisfactory, for I found difficulty in concentrating my mind, and not having decided previously what object to think of, I looked over the mantelpiece first and rejected two or three things before fixing on the candlestick. A very noisy train was also distracting my attention, so I wonder if you will think of that.

December 29th, 11.40 P.M.—I hope this will be more successful. I found to-night I could bring up a much clearer mental picture of the object—a small *Bristol ware jug* about six inches high, the lower part being brownish red, of a metallic coppery colour, the upper part having a band of reddish and light purple flowers of a somewhat conventional rose pattern—handle greenish. I do not think you have seen this jug as it has been put away in a cupboard and only lately brought out. I saw the jug chiefly by bright firelight.

The percipient, Miss Campbell, who was in Heathcote Street, London, W. C., writes on December 29th:

DEAR R.,—I have nothing very satisfactory to report. I am sorry to say I quite forgot on the 27th about our projected

experiments until I was just getting into bed, when I suddenly remembered, and just then I heard a train making a great noise, and as I have never noticed it like that before I wondered if it was one of your trains. I could not fix my mind on any object, but clock, watch, bath, all flitted past, and the circle of firelight in the front room ; the only word that came to me was "sand" and a sound like *k* or *q* at beginning of a word (you know I as often hear the name of the object as see the thing itself). I stopped, for it seemed ridiculous, but *you* must have attracted my attention, for just after I stopped I heard the clock here strike the half hour, and found next morning it was twenty minutes fast, so when I "suddenly remembered," it must have been just after eleven.

December 29, 11.15 P.M.—The first thing that came into my mind was a sponge, but I think that was suggested by the sound of water running in the bathroom, and next I had more distinctly an impression of a reddish metallic lustre, and I thought it must be the Moorish brass tray on May's mantelpiece : but at last I saw quite distinctly a small jug of a brownish metallic appearance below, with above a white band with coloured flowers, lilac and crimson, on it. I can't be sure what it was like at the top, for that seemed to be in shadow and seemed to be darkish—perhaps like the bottom, but I saw no metallic gleam. I don't remember anything like this among May's things, but the impression was so vivid I describe it.

The distance between agent and percipient in this series was not less than twelve miles. It is important to remark that neither lady saw the account written by the other until after the conclusion of the series of experiments. The original letters, in their envelopes, have been handed to us.

No. 10. From Miss Clarissa Miles and Miss Hermione Ramsden

A longer series of experiments was made by two

ladies in October and November, 1905. The agent was Miss Miles, living at 59 Egerton Gardens, London, the percipient was Miss Ramsden, of Bulstrode, Gerrard's Cross, Buckinghamshire, about twenty miles from London. The time of the experiments was fixed by pre-arrangement. There were fifteen trials in all. Subjoined are records of five of the trials, selected not merely for their success, but as illustrating the conditions of percipience. In the quotations which follow (A) is the note made by the agent, Miss Miles, at the time: (B) is the note made at the time by the percipient, Miss Ramsden, who was of course in ignorance of the subject chosen.

Experiment I

(A) October 18th, 1905. 7 P.M.

SPHINX.

I sat with my feet on the fender, I thought of Sphinx, I tried to visualize it. Spoke the word out loud. I could only picture it to myself quite small as seen from a distance. —C. M.

(B) Wednesday, October 18th, 1905. 7 P.M.

BULSTRODE, GERRARD'S CROSS, BUCKS.

I could not visualize, but seemed to feel that you were sitting with your feet on the fender in an arm-chair, in a loose black sort of tea-gown. The following words occurred to me:

Peter Evan or 'Eaven (Heaven).
Hour-glass (this seemed the chief idea).
Worcester deal box.
Daisy Millar.

[1] × arm socket or some word like it.

× suspension bridge.

× Sophia Ridley.

× soupirer (in French), which I felt inclined to spell *souspirer*.

There is some word with the letter S. I don't seem quite to have caught it.—H. R.

It will be seen that the impression throughout was auditory, and that there was a gradual approximation to the word *Sphinx*.

Experiment VII

(A) October 27th. SPECTACLES.

C. M.

(B) Friday, Oct. 27th. 7 P.M.

"Spectacles."

This was the only idea that came to me after waiting a long time. I thought of "sense perception," but that only confirms the above. My mind was such a complete blank that I fell asleep and dreamt a foolish dream (but not about you). At 7.25 I woke with a start.—H. R.

Miss Miles adds that she had been struck earlier in the day by a curious pair of spectacles, and had determined to think of them.

Experiment VIII

(A) October 31, 1905. SUNSET OVER ORATORY.

C. M.

(B) Tuesday, October 31, 1905. 7 P. M.

First it was the sun with rays and a face peering out of the rays. Then something went round and round like a wheel. Then the two seemed to belong together, and I thought of

[1] The crosses indicate those impressions which Miss Ramsden marked at the time as being especially vivid.

windmill. A windmill on a hill where it was dark and windy and there were dark clouds. Then it became the Crucifixion, and I saw the three crosses on the left side of the hill, and the face on the cross looked to the right, and it was dark. Wind and storm.

Surely this is right. It is the most vivid impression I have ever had. I scarcely *visualised* at all, it was just the faintest indication possible, but the suggestion was *most vivid*.—H. R.

Miss Miles adds:

I was painting Mr. Macnab, and there was a beautiful sunset over the Oratory. Mr. Macnab, who was so seated that he could watch it better than I could, walked to the window and drew my attention to it. His face became illuminated with the rays of the sun. It was a very windy, stormy evening, with weird orange lights in the sky. The sun sets to the left of the Oratory. From my window I see the central figure, and two sorts of uprights which look like figures in the dim twilight. These three objects show out dark against the sky to the left of the dome, on which there is a gold cross. All this I visualised the whole evening for Miss Ramsden to see. At first I could not account for the windmill. I discovered a weathercock in the distance, on the top of a building.—C. M.

[A photograph of the Brompton Oratory, taken by Miss Miles from the window of her studio, is reproduced here.]

Miss Ramsden adds:

Hitherto we had settled that Miss Miles was to make me think of a definite object, and I sat down as usual with my eyes shut, expecting to get a single idea like "spectacles." I was very much surprised to see this vision, and believed it was a picture of the Crucifixion which she was trying to make me see. I looked for the women watching at the foot of the cross, and was surprised that I could not see them. This is curious, because I distinctly saw a figure on the cross, which

BROMPTON ORATORY

From a photograph (showing weathercock on a building to the left)

was purely the result of my own imagination. The rays of the sun and the cross itself appeared for an instant to be luminous. I cannot exactly say *how* I saw the rest, but it was the most vivid impression of the kind that I ever had in my life.

Experiment X

(A) November 2nd. HANDS.

C. M.

(B) Thursday, November 2nd. 7 P.M.

You then went upstairs to your bedroom where there was no fire, so you put on a warm wrap.

Then I began to visualise a little black hand, quite small, much smaller than a child's, well formed, and the fingers straight. This was the chief thing. Then faintly an eye. Then W that turned to V, and V turned into a stag's skeleton head with antlers. A I P upside down so : V I d. . . . M E E might be my name. I was not sleepy when I began, yet it soon became impossible to keep awake. . . . The little black hand was the most vivid impression. H. R.

Miss Miles adds that she had been drawing an outline portrait in charcoal during the afternoon. The sitter states that the part most finished was the hands.

Experiment XII

(A) Monday, November 6th. MARGUERITE TENNANT.

C. M.

(B) Monday, November 6th.

——*a* ——*x* *M T*

Thomas? (Saw some of these letters separately, they seemed to spell Thomas.)

Þ HE (He?)

Nothing very vivid to-day.—H. R.

There was a considerable correspondence in some of the other experiments in this first series. The same ladies made a second series of fifteen trials in October and November, 1906, and here also the results showed a remarkable correspondence between the agent's thoughts and the percipient's impressions. The whole record is worth studying for the light thrown upon the nature of the percipient's impressions and on the conditions which apparently favour success in experiments of this kind.[1]

As already stated we have reproduced many of the effects ascribed by the earlier mesmerists to "community of sensation" between the operator and subject. Amongst other remarkable effects which may be ascribed to telepathy, are the inhibition of speaking on the part of the hypnotised subject by the silent will of the experimenter, and the production of sleep at a distance. The classic experiments of this character in recent times are those conducted by Professor Pierre Janet, Dr. Gibert, and later by Professor Richet, with Madame B.[2]

On the hypothesis of telepathy, the marvel of sleep at a distance may of course be explained without recourse to subtle fluids and visibly radiant will-power. But in the early days of the experimenting in this subject carried on by the Society

[1] *Proceedings*, S. P. R., vol. xxi., p. 60.

[2] See *Proceedings*, S. P. R., vol. iv., p. 133 *seqq.*; vol. v., pp. 43–45; *Revue de l' Hypnotisme*, February, 1888, etc.

for Psychical Research it did appear to some of us for a time that we had obtained proof of an actual physical effluence from the person of the mesmerist. It was found possible with certain susceptible subjects to influence a particular finger, without the subject's knowledge, so as to paralyse it and make it insensitive even to tolerably severe pain. The subject's arms would be placed through a screen in such a manner that it was impossible for him to know which finger or fingers were selected for the purpose of the experiment, and the hypnotiser would then direct his eyes and hand, at a distance varying from a few inches to a few feet, towards the finger selected. If the experiment was successful—and it generally was so—the desired result would follow in a minute or two.

In explanation of this remarkable result, Mr. Gurney was inclined to assume a direct physical influence from the operator's hand affecting locally the nervous system of the subject: an influence, moreover, which was conditioned by the will, since if no result was willed, no result followed, notwithstanding the presence of the operator's hand in close proximity to that of the subject.

Later experiments, however, by Mrs. Sidgwick and Miss Johnson have shown that the close proximity of the agent is not an essential condition. The results can be reproduced at a distance of twenty-five feet, or when a thick screen of glass is

interposed. It is more in accordance with analogy therefore to ascribe the results, like the others dealt with in this chapter, to an affection of the central rather than the local nervous system.[1]

[1] See *Proceedings*, S. P. R., vol. i., pp. 257–260; vol. ii., pp. 201–205; vol. iii., pp. 453–459; vol. v., pp. 14–17; vol. viii., pp. 577–596.

CHAPTER III

SPONTANEOUS THOUGHT TRANSFERENCE: MIND'S EYE VISIONS

BEFORE attempting to trace the operation of telepathy in a wider field it is necessary to utter a word of warning. The experimental evidence of which a few examples have been cited in the last chapter constitutes, and must continue to constitute, the main justification for the assumption of a new faculty. However calculated to impress the imagination may be the narratives which follow, they are indefinitely inferior in evidential cogency. It was these spontaneous occurrences, with their dramatic setting, which first drew attention to the subject and which, indeed, first suggested the possibility of a new mode of communication between mind and mind. But it is doubtful how far such occurrences could in themselves have justified the belief. The position may be illustrated from another field of research. So long as the exponents of the germ theory could support their position only by arguments derived from the observed distribution of certain diseases, their manner of propagation and development, their periodic character—phenomena which, though sufficiently

striking, are not in themselves, perhaps, susceptible of exact interpretation—the doctrine remained a more or less plausible hypothesis. It was not until the germs, whose existence had been so long suspected, were actually isolated in the laboratory, and on being introduced into other animal bodies had reproduced the disease, that the association of certain maladies with the presence of specific micro-organisms in the body became an accepted conclusion of science. In both cases the reasons for the inferior cogency of the arguments derived from mere observation of spontaneous phenomena are the same. We cannot, in spontaneous phenomena, so control the conditions as to eliminate the operation of all possible causes but one; and we cannot rely so implicitly on the accuracy of the records. It is the latter circumstance which, for our present purpose, constitutes the most serious drawback. In most of the spontaneous cases here cited, even though it is difficult to satisfy ourselves in every case that some obscure association of ideas, some deception of the senses or other unrecognised cause, may not have contributed to the result, yet the central incident is as a rule sufficiently striking and unusual to make it practically certain that the coincidences, if we consider the cases as a whole, are not due to such "accidental" causes, *provided that we can be sure that the incident is correctly described.* That is really the crux of the question. The cases of intimation of death by dream, waking vision or apparition, cited in this

volume, are in themselves sufficiently numerous, as a simple calculation will show, to preclude explanation by chance, if no serious error has vitiated the records.

When Miss Campbell and Miss Despard—to take an illustration from the preceding chapter—are occupied, the one in present sensation, the other in imagination with the same scene, the conditions, as said, can be effectively controlled. Further, the experimenters have some experience in recording their observations : the time of the experiment is of their own choosing, so that they are not taken unawares : the records are practically contemporaneous with the events ; each is made before any knowledge of the other's experience is forthcoming. Lastly, both parties are necessarily concerned to be as accurate as possible in describing their own side of the experience, since any fanciful embellishment may impair the accuracy of the correspondence. But when, to take the strongest case, a man sees the vision of a friend at the time of his death, we have no such safeguards to ensure the accuracy of the record. The vision finds him unprepared and often unable to appreciate its significance. Even when the impression produced is such as to induce the percipient to make a note of the circumstance or to write a letter about it before the correspondence with the death is known, it is but rarely, as the following narratives will show, that the contemporary record is preserved. When no note is made, and we have to depend entirely on

the memory of the narrator writing after the fact of the coincidence is known, there are many errors from which the most scrupulous of witnesses can scarcely hope to hold himself altogether free. Often the percipient's experience may be coloured in retrospection by the emotion roused by the news subsequently received. In any case with the lapse of time the picture preserved in the memory is liable to be unconsciously brought more and more into conformity with the narrator's conception of what ought to have happened. One by one irrelevant details drop out, and confirmatory touches are added to heighten the tints. As the years pass, any interval which may have existed between the vision and the death tends to disappear, and the two events coalesce, like a binary star, into one. The result actually presented to us will, in such cases, bear less resemblance to a photograph than to a finished picture, in which the crudity and inadequacy of the actual are fulfilled by the unconscious craftsmanship of the imagination. No process is more difficult to detect and guard against because it is, for the most part, instinctive, and involves no conscious departure from good faith. The ability to tell the exact truth can only, as a rule, be acquired by a severe process of mental discipline.

But it would be easy to exaggerate the importance of these considerations, so far as educated witnesses are concerned. Narratives written within a few years of the event, and corroborated by the testimony of others, may, it is thought, be relied

upon so far as the central incident is concerned, even if the details are liable to unconscious embellishment. Moreover, the very nature of the emotion aroused by the incident—as when the death of a dear friend is concerned—may in itself prove the strongest incentive to accuracy. Taken as a whole the reader will probably agree that the narratives here quoted bear on their face the marks of their authenticity: the witnesses in most cases have obviously been restrained in narrating their experiences by a strong sense of responsibility and of reality. And a comparison of the first-hand narratives here quoted with each other, and with the second-hand ghost stories bandied from mouth to mouth in ordinary social intercourse, will suggest that the narrators in the former case are describing with fair accuracy facts of their own experience; and that those facts constitute a true natural group, distinguishable, alike by what they include and by what they do not include, from the mere figments of the story-teller's imagination, whether invented for amusement or for edification.

The narratives which follow are printed as samples, and as samples only, of the evidences accumulated by the Society for Psychical Research. I have as a rule refrained, lest I should weary the reader, from drawing attention to the evidential aspect of the case; and have, for the same reason, presented in most cases only a brief summary of the corroborative testimony. I have endeavoured, however, in all cases, to bring out any evidential

defect in such corroborative testimony; and as the reference is always given to the Society's *Journal* or *Proceedings*, the reader can in every case, if he pleases, study for himself the full accounts there printed.

The following account was sent, in French, to the late F. W. H. Myers by a well-known man of science. Three years ago I myself had the opportunity of discussing the incident with the percipient. A fragment of a book cover, bearing the words mentioned, was enclosed with the account.

No. 11. From Professor ——,

Paris, 11th December, 1897

On Friday, December 10, 1897, at about 10.35 P.M., being alone and at work in my library, I began to think, without any reason, that there had been a fire at the Opera. My wife and daughter had gone off to the Opera at 8; I had not been able to accompany them. The impression was so strong that I wrote F (Feu!) on the cover of a book which lay near me. A few instants later, wishing to emphasise this presentiment, I wrote "Att" (for attention) "Fire!" I enclose what I wrote. I did not, however, feel anxious, but said to myself, "There has been no great fire at the Opera, only an alarm of fire."

At the same time, or rather ten or fifteen minutes later, at 10.55, my sister, Madame B., who lives in the same house, and whose bedroom is on the same floor with my study, had an idea that my study was on fire. She was at the moment on the point of getting into bed, but she came *en déshabille* to my study-door and put her hand on the handle to come in; but then, telling herself that her fear was absurd, she went back to bed. She tells me, however, that she would nevertheless have come in but that she was afraid that I had some one with me in the room.

At 12.10 my wife and daughter came back from the theatre. They instantly told me that there had been a sort of beginning of a conflagration. I said nothing, and they told me as follows: Between 8.45 and 9, at the end of the first act of *Les Maîtres Chanteurs*, a smell of burning and a light smoke were perceived in the auditorium. My wife said to my daughter: "I will go out and see what is the matter; if I make a sign to you follow me at once without saying a word or even waiting to put your cloak on." The attendant whom she asked said that nothing was wrong. Nevertheless there was some emotion among the audience, and five or six persons in the stalls got up and went away. The smoke came, no doubt, from a stove. Note that this is the first time that my wife ever left her seat in a theatre from alarm of fire. It is the first time that I have ever been anxious about fire in her absence, and I do not suppose that I jot down my possible presentiments more than five or six times in a year.

My sister has never before been anxious about fire in my room.[1]

It seems not improbable, especially as she connected the danger with her brother, that Madame B. was influenced through him, and not through her friends at the opera. It should be added that the narrator has had other experiences apparently of a telepathic character.

In this instance the transferred idea, though in itself of a sufficiently alarming character, was apparently almost without emotional accompaniment. In many cases, however, the profound emotional disturbance caused is the most characteristic feature of the impression. In the case which follows, whatever the nature of the emotion excited,—and

[1] *Journal*, S. P. R., November, 1898.

it does not appear to have been consciously defined as fear or anxiety,—it was sufficiently strong to impel the percipient to a very unusual course of action.

No. 12. From Mr. T. B. Garrison

Ozark, Mo., July 29, 1896

My mother, Nancy J. Garrison, died on Friday night, October 4, 1888, at her home three miles north-east of Ozark, Christian County, Missouri. She was 58 years old. I was then living at Fordland, in Webster County, Missouri, about 18 miles north-east of my mother's home. I had not seen my mother for two months at the time of her death, but had heard from [her] by letter from week to week.

On the night of my mother's death there was a meeting in Fordland, and myself and wife attended the preaching. We had then one child, a baby a year old. The meeting had been going on a week or more. About ten o'clock, just before the meeting closed, while the congregation was singing, I felt the first desire to see my mother. The thought of my mother was suggested by the sight of some of the penitents at the altar, who were very warm and sweating. My mother was subject to smothering spells, and while suffering from these attacks she would perspire freely and we had to fan her. In the faces of the mourners I seemed to see my mother's suffering. And then the impulse to go to her became so strong that I gave the baby to a neighbour-woman and left the church without telling my wife. She was in another part of the house.

The train going west which would have taken me [to] Rogersville, seven miles of the distance to my mother's place, was due at 10.30 P.M., but before I got home and changed my clothes and returned to the depot, the cars had left the station. I still felt that I must see my mother and started down the railroad track alone, and walked to Rogersville. Here I left the railroad and walked down the waggon way leading from Marshfield to Ozark, Mo. It was about 3 o'clock A.M.

when I reached my mother's house. I knocked at the door two or three times and got no response. Then I kicked the door, but still made no one hear me. At last I opened the door with my knife and walked in and lighted a lamp. Then my sister, Mrs. Billie Gilley, the only person who had been living with my mother, awoke and I asked her where mother was. She replied that she was in bed, and I said "She is dead," for by that time I felt that she could not be alive. She had never failed to wake before when I had entered the room at night.

I went to my mother's bed and put my hand on her forehead. It was cold. She had been dead about three hours the neighbours thought from the condition of her body. She had gone to bed about ten o'clock at night, feeling better than usual. She and my sister had talked awhile after going to bed. They were aiming to come to Ozark the next morning, and intended to get up early.

The above facts cover my experience as fully as I can tell the story. I have no explanation for the matter. It is as much a mystery to me now as ever. I could not believe such a strange affair if told by any one else, and yet I could swear to every fact stated. . . .

THOMAS B. GARRISON.[1]

Corroboration of Mr. Garrison's account has been received from his wife, his wife's mother, to whom he announced his intention of going to Ozark just before he started on the journey, and from one of the neighbours who were called in to assist when the fact of the death was discovered.

With this may be compared a remarkable case, originally recorded by Mr. Andrew Lang in *Longman's Magazine*, in which two persons independently received a strong impression that something

[1] *Journal*, S. P. R., October, 1897.

disastrous had happened in an Edinburgh flat. In one case the impression was sufficiently strong to induce a neighbour to leave his work and call to make enquiries. He found that the maid-servant had just been killed by an accident.[1]

There are one or two cases, resting on good evidence, which suggest the possibility of communication between the animal and the human intelligence. Thus Lady Carbery writes that one Sunday, having paid her usual visit after lunch to a favourite mare, she had returned to the garden a quarter of a mile distant, and sat herself down to read. Twenty minutes later, feeling an uncomfortable sensation that something was amiss with "Kitty," she returned to the stable, and found her "cast" and in need of help.[2]

In the following case the impression, though not referred to any particular sense, was of a much more definite character than those last cited:

No. 13. From Mr. J. F. Young

New Road, Llanelly, March 9, 1891.

The following account of a presentiment I recently had may be interesting to you.

I was having my supper on the evening of February 15th last, when a message came from a customer requiring my services. I sent back a reply that I would come immediately I had my supper. It has always been a strong point with me to keep my appointments, and therefore, having hastily finished my meal, I was in the act of leaving the table when I suddenly exclaimed, "There!!! I have just had an intima-

[1] The case is given in full in *Journal*, S. P. R., June, 1895.

[2] *Journal*, S. P. R., February, 1905.

tion that Robert is dead" : the Robert referred to is a Robert Hallett (a brother-in-law) who was residing near my sister (Mrs. Ponting) at Sturminster Newton, Dorset. He had been bed-ridden from paralysis for this last two years, but had recently been much worse.

I at once entered full particulars in my diary. Date, Feb. 15. Message, and time of message, 9.40 P.M. My sister-in-law was present the whole time, and can vouch for the circumstances. On the 17th I received a post-card from my sister at Sturminster Newton, bearing date Feb. 16th, stating, that "Robert had passed away, will write to-morrow."

In the meantime I had written to my sister Mrs. Ponting, mentioning my presentiment, *and our letters crossed*, for the following morning a letter came from her (I must mention here she had been assisting in nursing my brother-in-law), saying, "I was glad you had a presentiment of poor Robert's release, he passed away at 7.45 P.M., then Lottie [my niece Lottie Hallett] and I came home *till 9.40*, and that was the time you had the impression."

I wish to state two facts in connection with the foregoing case. (1) I was not thinking of him at the time, my mind being engrossed in my appointment, and the impression came so startlingly sudden, which caused me to hastily say, There!!! . . . as before stated; and (2) at the same moment, I had a sense of a *presence* at my left, so much so, that I looked sharply round, but found no one there.

This was my first and only impression during his long illness.

The note in the diary is as follows[1]:

Feb. 15. As I rose from supper, a message came, as if by spirit influence, to say, "Robert has passed away." Miss

[1] The note occurs, not on the dated pages, but on some blank sheets at the end of the diary, amongst other memoranda. The previous memo. is dated 12th Feb., the two following entries are dated, in this order, Feb. 28th and Feb. 19th. The entry of the 15th contains therefore no internal evidence of having been written at the time.

Bennett present. I said, "There, I have just had an intimation Robert is dead." Time, 9.40 P.M. Noted full particulars on my return: was called away. Had to see a customer on business.

Miss E. Bennett, who was present at the moment and Miss Lottie Young, a niece to whom Mr. Young related his experience on the following morning, have both confirmed the account. Mrs. Ponting has searched unsuccessfully for Mr. Young's original letter to her announcing his presentiment.[1]

Mr. Young, it should be added, has had several similar impressions which have coincided with external events.

Let us now pass on to visual impressions. The following case is interesting as showing the peculiar vividness with which these mind's eye visions occasionally present themselves.

No. 14. From Miss C. P. M. C.

(The account was written in the beginning of June, 1889.)

I distinctly saw a person whom I knew (M. T.) lying in bed, and the room and furniture exactly as I last saw it. I had the impression of hearing her voice. The impression was so vivid that for the time it stopped my reading, and I remember being surprised at it and wondering whether the woman were alive or dead. I had had a letter three days previously saying she was dying. She had been an invalid when I first saw her, so that I never knew her otherwise than in bed.

Place: probably in the Geological Museum. Date: May 14, 1889, Tuesday, in the morning.

[1] *Journal*, S. P. R., May, 1901.

I was reading geology [at the time]. I was not out of health, but I was in anxiety on quite a different subject.[1]

M. T., as we have ascertained from the Register at Somerset House, died at Heaton Norris on the 14th May, 1889. Miss C. heard of the death a day or two afterwards, and fixed the exact date of her vision by an entry in a diary, referring to an incident which she remembered to have occurred on the same day as the vision. She added that she had had no other experience which impressed her so much; she had, however, a faint impression of "something like it" having occurred when she was a schoolgirl, but she cannot remember details.

In the next case all the details given are trivial, but the amount of correspondence is sufficient to make it probable that the result was not a mere happy conjecture; and, as we have seen both the original notes made by the percipient and the letter from Rome, it is certain that the facts are accurately stated; in this respect the case stands almost on the evidential level of some of the experiments quoted in the last chapter. The following is a copy, made by Mr. Piddington, then Hon. Secretary of the Society for Psychical Research, of a note written by Mrs. D. on 27th January, 1900.

No. 15. From Mrs. D.

Saturday, Jan. 27, 1900. This afternoon while I was sit-

[1] *Proceedings*, S. P. R., vol. x., p. 83. Miss C.'s narrative, it should be explained, was given in answer to set questions contained on one of our "Census" forms. See below, chapter v.

ting near the fire talking to L., I was holding a small photo of Mrs. H. and describing her. "Where is she now?" asked L. "In Rome," I answered, "settled for the winter." And as I spoke, suddenly I felt conscious of what she might be doing at the time. "Do you know," I went on, "I think she must be just coming out of her room on to a high terrace such as we have here, only that there is green over it." L. did not say "nonsense," but just asked quietly: "What is she wearing?" "A black skirt," I answered, "and a mauve blouse—she is looking out over many roofs and spires—and now she has gone back into the room and a maid is closing the shutters." "Can you see her room?" asked L. "I think it is small," I said; "there is a cottage-piano and a writing-table near it. I think the large head of Hermes stands on it and something silver." And then I felt nothing more and added: "What nonsense I have been talking!" L. thinks there may be some truth in the impression, and wants me to write and ask Mrs. H. what she remembers of this afternoon. It was about 6 o'clock.

I cannot say I saw anything; somehow I seemed to feel her surroundings were just so. I have never been to Rome, nor has she told me anything of where she lives beyond the address.

Copy of extracts selected by J. G. P. from a letter addressed by Mrs. H. to Mrs. D. Postmark of envelope: "6 2 00 Roma"

. . . . You certainly have a power to visit your friends, and to see them, and to make them feel you. Your letter is absolutely startling and mysterious. And now I can answer it detail for detail, and item for item. [The writer then avows her belief in telepathy and clairvoyance.] . . . That you have peeped at me in my small Roman house is certainly a fact. As you state the facts, every small detail is not altogether exact, but the facts as a whole are true and exact and perfect, as you shall see.

. . . . . .

Let me begin by answering bit by bit all you say. I have

a dear little vine-covered terrace, looking out into the Piazza di Spagna, and looking also right up to the spires or rather towers of S. Trinita dei Monti, with the great obelisk in front. The afternoon of Jan. 27th I returned to my home after a walk and [after] making a few purchases, at 5 P. M. I took off my fur jacquette, and went at once into my dining-room to see about the dinner-table, as three friends came [or "come"] at 7 P. M. to dine. I busied myself about the table for some time, then stepped on to the terrace (which is so pretty, but opens, unfortunately, from the kitchen). I went into the terrace at that time to see about our dessert for dinner, which I had put there to become cool. Then I went back into the dining-room, and as the hanging-lamp had just been lighted, I ordered the maid to drop the outside curtains. She did so. I remember that I looked just then at the clock, and it was 5.35 P. M. I had on a black skirt, a black silk blouse, and a mauve tie, which twisted about my neck and hung in two ends to my waist. It looked to you like a mauve blouse. Then I went into our small salon and took something from the table. I remember it distinctly. Our salon is very small; there is an upright piano and a writing-table, on which are photos and books too, and a lot of little silver things. Hermes (your photo to me) stands very near, on another little table, quite near, in fact. It is all quite mysterious. I believe you have really peeped into my house.[1] . . .

Vivid and detailed visions of the kind given in the last two narratives are of rare occurrence with persons in a state of normal wakefulness. The early mesmerists, both in this country and in France and Germany, have recorded many cases where the subject in a state of trance purported to have visions of distant scenes and of the persons taking part in them: and these descriptions were in many cases

[1] *Journal*, S. P. R., October, 1906.

subsequently verified. To the faculty supposed to be thus demonstrated the name of "travelling clairvoyance" was given by the English mesmerists, it being assumed that the spirit of the percipient left the body and was actually present in some fashion at the scene described. Even if we accept the facts, there is of course no need to adopt so fantastic an explanation. From our ignorance, however, of the attendant circumstances, and especially of the opportunities which may have offered for fraud, it is difficult to place much reliance on these older records. A few similar cases have, however, been recorded by competent observers in recent years: one or two examples are quoted in chapter xiv.

But outside of the hypnotic trance the most favourable conditions for clairvoyance of this kind appear to be found in crystal vision. It is not quite clear what part the crystal plays in facilitating the emergence of these dream-visions. The quietness and freedom from external distraction no doubt contribute to the result. But it seems probable that the mere act of fixing the gaze and the attention on a bright object is liable to induce slight dissociation of consciousness. Further it is likely that in some cases the crystal furnishes a *point de repère* —a nucleus of actual sensation—round which the imaginary scene is built up.

Mr. Andrew Lang has within the last few years collected amongst his acquaintances many instances of scrying or crystal vision, from which I select the following :

No. 16. From Miss Angus[1]

4th January, 1898.

I had another successful scry on Tuesday evening, 21st December, 1897, when Mr. Mac—— asked me to look in the ball. He had never seen crystal gazing, so I told him to fix his mind on some scene, which I would endeavour to describe. Almost at once I saw a large room with a polished floor reflected, the lights being very bright and all round; but the room was *empty*, which I thought very uninteresting! Mr. Mac—— said how strange that was, as he had not, so far, been able to fix his mind on any particular *face* in the ballroom. However, he asked me to look again, and this time I saw a smaller room, very comfortably furnished, and at a small table under a bright light with a glass globe (no shade on the globe) sat a young girl, in a high-necked white blouse, apparently writing or reading. I could not see her face distinctly, but she was pale, with her hair drawn softly off her forehead (no fringe), and seemed to have rather small features.

Mr. Mac—— said my description quite tallied with the lady he was thinking of, a Miss ——, whom he had met for the first time at a ball a few nights before, but he had meant me to see her dressed as he met her in the ballroom.

We consulted our watches, and found that it was between 10.15 and 10.30 when we were scrying, and Mr. Mac—— said he would try to find out what Miss —— was doing at that hour. Fortunately I had not long to wait for his report, as he met her the next evening, and told her of my experiment. She was very much interested, I believe, and said it was all quite true! She had been wearing a white blouse, and, as far as she remembers, she was still reading at 10.30 under a bright incandescent light, with a glass globe on it.

Mr. Mac—— writes:

December 30, 1897.

I was at Miss Angus's house on Tuesday, December 21st, 1897. Miss Angus said that if I thought of somebody she

[1] *Journal*, S. P. R., May, 1899.

would look in her crystal ball and find out the personal appearance of the person of whom I was thinking, and what he or she was doing at that moment (10.25 P.M.). She told me to think of the surroundings and the place in which I had last seen the person of whom I was thinking. I thought of somebody that she did not know—Miss ——, whom I had met at a dance on December 20th. I thought of the ballroom where I had been introduced to her, but at first I could not centre my mind on her face. Then Miss A. said that she saw a big room with a polished floor, and which was brilliantly lit up, but that at present she could not make out any people there. Then I succeeded in fixing my mind on Miss ——'s face, when Miss A. said that she saw a girl with fair wavy hair either writing a letter or reading, but probably the former, under a lamp with a glass globe, and that she had a high-necked white blouse on. All this took about five minutes.

I saw Miss —— again at a dance on December 22d—the next night. I told her what had happened, and she said that, as far as she remembered, at 10.25 the night before she had been either writing a letter or reading, but probably writing, under an incandescent gas-light with a glass globe, and that she had been wearing a high-necked white blouse.

I had only known Miss Angus for a very short time, so she did not know what friends I had in ———. I do not think that Miss Angus knows Miss ——. There were three other people in the room all the time, one of whom was playing the piano. This is exactly what happened, as far as I can remember.

Sometimes the part of the crystal is taken by a glass of water, or other shining surface. We have a narrative from the wife of an engine-driver who, waking up at 3 A.M. one night, saw in a glass of water by her bedside a vision of a railway accident. At about that time her husband was actually passing near the scene of an accident, similar to the scene

in the water vision, which had occurred a few hours previously.[1]

In the following case it may be conjectured that the conditions of a spiritualist séance, the quietness, the freedom from preoccupation, and the partial darkness were favourable to the emergence of a clairvoyant vision.

For the evidence we are indebted to Mr. W. W. Baggally, of No. 23 Lower Phillimore Place, Kensington, W., a member of the Society, who is acquainted with the principal witnesses in the case and has full confidence in their integrity.

No. 17. From Mr. John Polley,[2]

95 Church St., Stoke Newington,
London, N., June, 1901.

At a séance held within the sound of Big Ben on May 8th, 1901, there were present Mrs. E. V. M., Mr. Thomas Atwood, and myself. As Mr. Atwood resumed his seat after delivering an invocation (about 8.30 P.M.), I became aware of a vision, which presented itself on the left of where I was seated. The scene appeared as being some 5 feet distant from me, and displayed part of the interior of a room, viz., that part where the stove stood. The fire in the stove was small and dull, and close beside it was an overturned chair. In front of the fire was something that looked like a fire-guard or clothes-horse, but this was not quite clear to me. Playing or climbing over this article was a child, who fell forward, and, when it regained its feet, I noticed that its dress was on fire.

I made no reference to the matter at the time, as I had an impression that the vision might be connected with some occurrence in the family of Mrs. M., and I was averse to mentioning it for fear of awaking sad memories.

[1] *Journal*, S. P. R., December, 1903.
[2] *Journal*, S. P. R., January, 1902.

After some manifestations of movements of the table round which we were seated the whole vision was repeated, and this time I had an uncontrollable impulse to speak. Upon my describing what I had just seen for the second time, I was much relieved to hear that the matter was not recognised as being connected in any way with the sitters. I may mention here that the child appeared to be about three years old, and, judging from the style of dress, I described it as a girl, although the vision would apply equally well to a boy, as, at that early age, the short clothes worn by both sexes would be very similar.

Next Thursday morning, May 9th, 1901, upon awakening, I described to my wife the events of the previous evening's séance. On the evening of the same day, viz., Thursday, May 9th, I was out with a friend, and upon my return home at 11.5 P.M. my sister, Mary Louisa Polley (who resided with me at that time), made the remark, "I have a piece of bad news for you, Jack." "Well," I replied, "what is it? let me know," and she answered, "Brother George's little son Jackie has been burned to death." Like a flash I realised the connection of the sad event with my vision of the previous night. I then asked her (my sister), "How did you know this, and when?" She replied, "Mr. Fred Sinnett told me when he came over to see us this evening." JOHN POLLEY.

Mr. Polley's statement is confirmed by the other sitters at the séance, by his wife and sister, and by the father of the child. The accident happened on May 7th, and the child died before noon on the following day, the day of the séance. Mr. Fred G. Polley, the father of the child, explained that he sent no intimation to his brother of the accident or death until Thursday, May 9th.

In the cases so far cited, where the impression has been sufficiently definite to evoke a specific

sense-image, that image has been of a visual type. The percipient's experience has not indeed been of such a character as to lead him to mistake what he saw for external reality—he has not been the subject of a hallucination. Nevertheless he has *seen* something, if only, as we may say, with the mind's eye. This is the commonest and the most impressive form assumed by these messages, when they fall below the level of actual hallucination. More rarely, the telepathic impulse expresses itself as an inner voice, or other articulate sound. Impressions of this character are as a rule less evidentially conclusive than those affecting the sense of sight: they contain less detail; it is difficult to eliminate the possibility of an external cause; and even when it is certain that the impression was subjective, the words frequently consist only of the percipient's own name. In the following case, however, the correspondence appears to be sufficiently detailed to exclude the operation of chance: and the coincidence, it will be seen, is attested by a post-card written before the correspondence was known.

No. 18. From Frau U.,

21st February, 1902.[1]

On the evening of February 25, 1897, I was sitting alone, as I almost invariably did, and reading, when I suddenly thought of the Beethoven Trio, Op. 1, No. 1, so vividly that I got up to look for the music, which I had not touched for nearly twenty years. It was just as if I could hear the 'cello and

[1] *Journal*, S. P. R., May, 1903. The account in the text is translated from the original German.

violin parts, and the bowing and expression seemed to me to be that of two gentlemen who had played with me often in C. so many years before. One of them, Kammermusiken L., first 'cellist of the Residenz Theatre in C., had been my eldest son's master, but had been called to H. in 1878. The other, who was employed by my husband at that time, as clerk of the works, had subsequently quitted C. also, and removed in the middle of the nineties to H. I had often seen him since he left C., and had also played duets with him, but never again in a trio. I got out the piano part and began to play. I must here admit that I had played with Z. and L. principally the Trio in B sharp, Op. 97, and the one in C flat, Op. 1, No. 3, and was myself surprised that this Op. 1, No. 1, which we had hardly ever played, was ringing in my ears. At any rate I heard with my mental ear this melody so exactly that I played the piece right through to the end.

About ten o'clock the bell rang and my house-mate, the daughter of Lieutenant-Colonel G., who lived over me, came in. She apologised for her late visit and assured me that she could not sleep until she had found out what I had been playing. I supplied the information, and she remarked, "Well, what brought that into your head?" "I don't know. I haven't opened the book for twenty years, but before I began I heard Z. and L. playing and I felt I must recall the full harmony."

The next day but one the enclosed card came; it had been written, as we established by subsequent correspondence, on the same evening and at the same time, and as the postmark shows, delivered [in Kiel] the following [should be "the next but one"] morning.

The following is a translation of the post-card:

H., 25 Feb., '97.

After playing Beethoven Op. 1, No. 1, we send you hearty greetings in remembrance of happy hours spent together in the past.

Z., R. L.

The card bears the postmark "H–26.2.97. 8–9 V" (V = A.M.) Fräulein G. writes that she remembers Frau U. playing the piece in question; and that Frau U. told her that she had not played it for many years. This incident is fully discussed in the *Journal* for May, 1903, and from the more detailed account there given it seems clear that the coincidence was not due to ordinary association of ideas or to any external suggestion.

We have a few examples of sensations of smell, touch, or pain which appear to have originated by thought transference.

One example of the last category may be quoted. The percipient's experience, it may be thought, was, as described, sufficiently vivid and lifelike to be reckoned as an actual sensation; and the fact that she employed physical remedies for it would seem to confirm this view. It is here classed, however, with mental impressions, because with sensations of a tactile or a painful nature we have not the same criterion as we possess in the case of affections of the higher senses to distinguish between what is due to an external cause, and what is purely subjective. The feeling of pain, especially, is so frequently excited by causes within the organism that in many cases it must remain a matter of doubt whether to seek for the origin of the discomfort within or without.

No. 19.

Mrs. Castle writes from Minneapolis in May, 1896[1]:

[1] *Journal*, S. P. R., October, 1898.

On the first day of last July (1895), while resting late in the afternoon, I suddenly experienced a constrictive sensation in my throat, accompanied by a numbness, which increased for some time, and finally became so distressing that I bathed and rubbed my throat several times—while dressing, soon after it began,—using also a mental treatment (in which I am a firm believer). I could discover no cause within myself for such a sensation, which was unlike anything I had ever experienced before. It occurred to me that it might be due to some influence outside of myself, and I thought of my husband with some anxiety, but I remember that the fear for his safety was dissipated by the ludicrous thought that nothing but a "hanging" would be an excuse for such symptoms. I thought also of a friend (Mrs. Baldwin) who was stopping with me at the time. She had gone out that afternoon, and was not in the house when this occurred.

A stiff collar had been a source of annoyance to her frequently, and I thought of that as a possible cause for my discomfort, knowing that she was wearing a freshly laundried shirt-waist at the time. She came in for a few moments to announce her intention of dining out, and I asked her if her collar had made her uncomfortable that afternoon. She assured me to the contrary, and I told her of my strange experience. We discussed it while she was in, and soon after she left Mr. Castle (my husband) came home to dinner.

Mr. Castle's account of his experience is as follows:

On the afternoon of the first day of July, 1895, I unexpectedly had an operation performed on my throat by Dr. Bell.

To allow for the passing off of the effects of anæsthetic used in my throat he told me to remain quiet awhile after the operation. But I thought I could save time by sitting in the barber's chair, and so walked about — yards to a barber's shop. There I was soon seized with a terrible choking sensation

which frightened the barber and myself very greatly. I remained sitting there nearly an hour before I could go on. On arriving home about 6 P.M. I told Mrs. Castle that I came near getting in a bad fix. On her asking "When?" I said "About an hour and a half ago." She then described her sudden constricted sensation about that same time, and her telling Mrs. Baldwin of it.

This is the only time I have had such a sensation in my throat.

Mr. Castle adds that there have been other apparent instances of thought transference between himself and Mrs. Castle.

Mrs. Baldwin writes to say that she remembers the incident described.

The narrative recalls the experimental cases of "community of sensation" referred to in the last chapter. But here agent and percipient instead of being in the same room were several miles apart. It is to be noted that in the present case, as in our own experiments, the discomfort caused appears to have been by no means of an ideal character. In another case of the kind Mr. E. E. Robinson tells us that lying in bed one Sunday morning he experienced an acute pain in his thumb, and held up the hand to see if it had actually been injured. At the moment Mrs. Robinson, who was dressing, exclaimed that her thumb hurt her so much as to cause difficulty in dressing.[1]

It occasionally happens that the influence of a distant friend appears to be reflected, not in the

[1] *Journal*, S. P. R., May, 1907.

percipient's consciousness, but in his actions. The cases are too numerous to allow us to dismiss them as merely chance correspondence. But we are not bound to conclude that the telepathic impulse has power directly to affect the muscular system. In accordance with the view already suggested, that telepathy operates more readily on the subconsciousness, or, if we prefer so to phrase it, on the lower cerebral centres, we may suppose that so far as the agent is concerned the process of transmission is alike in all cases; and that it is the percipient's organism which is responsible for translating the transmitted impulse now into an idea, now into an action. The most striking illustrations of this kind of thought transference are to be found in automatic writing. The subject of automatic writing however, is complicated with other considerations, and it will probably be better to defer dealing with it until a later chapter. The following case, however, may be cited in this connection, since it appears clear that the news communicated did not rise to consciousness until in the act of utterance.

No. 20. From Archdeacon Bruce[1]

St. Woolos' Vicarage, Newport,

Monmouthshire, July 6th, 1892.

On April 19th, Easter Tuesday, I went to Ebbw Vale to preach at the opening of a new iron church in Beaufort parish. I had arranged that Mrs. Bruce and my daughter should drive in the afternoon.

[1] *Journal*, S. P. R., December, 1893.

The morning service and public luncheon over, I walked up to the Vicarage at Ebbw Vale to call on the Vicar. As I went there I heard the bell of the new church at Beaufort ringing for afternoon service at 3. It had stopped some little time before I reached the Vicarage (of Ebbw Vale). The Vicar was out, and it struck me that I might get back to the Beaufort new church in time to hear some of the sermon before my train left (at 4.35). On my way back through Ebbw Vale, and not far from the bottom of the hill on which the Ebbw Vale Vicarage is placed, I saw over a provision shop one of those huge, staring Bovril advertisements—the familiar large ox-head. I had seen fifty of them before, but something fascinated me in connection with this particular one. I turned to it, and was moved to address it in these, my *ipsissima verba:* "You ugly brute, don't stare at me like that: has some accident happened to the wife?" Just the faintest tinge of uneasiness passed through me as I spoke, but it vanished at once. This must have been as nearly as possible 3.20. I reached home at 6 to find the vet. in my stable-yard tending my poor horse, and Mrs. Bruce and my daughter in a condition of collapse in the house. The accident had happened—so Mrs. Bruce thinks—precisely at 3.30, but she is not confident of the moment. My own times I can fix precisely.

I had no reason to fear any accident, as my coachman had driven them with the same horse frequently, and save a little freshness at starting, the horse was always quiet on the road, even to sluggishness. A most unusual occurrence set it off. A telegraph operator, at the top of a telegraph post, hauled up a long flashing coil of wire under the horse's nose. Any horse in the world, except the Troy horse, would have bolted under the circumstances.

My wife's estimate of the precise time can only be taken as approximate. She saw the time when she got home, and took that as her zero, but the confusion and excitement of the walk home from the scene of the accident leaves room for doubt as to her power of settling the time accurately. The accident happened about $2\frac{1}{4}$ miles from home, and she was home by

4.10; but she was some time on the ground waiting until the horse was disengaged, etc.

W. Conybeare Bruce.

Archdeacon Bruce adds later:

May 20th, 1893.

I think I stated the fact that the impression of danger to Mrs. Bruce was only momentary—it passed at once—and it was only when I heard of the accident that I recalled the impression. I did not therefore go home expecting to find that anything had happened. W. Conybeare Bruce.

Mrs. Bruce writes:

The first thought that flashed across me as the accident happened was, "What will W. say?" My ruling idea then was to get home before my husband, so as to save him alarm.

In this case, it will be noticed, the pictorial advertisement appears to have played an analogous part to the crystal in a crystal vision.

We have a few other examples in which the impulse has led directly to action—prayer, the taking of a journey, etc. M. Flammarion in his book, *L' Inconnu et les problèmes psychiques*, quotes a curious case. The narrator, after explaining that in childhood he was "encore un peu dévot," and in the habit of saying his prayers nightly, relates that one evening, when twelve years of age, he prayed for his grandmother with unusual fervour, and on closing his eyes had a vision of that relative. The next day he learned that his grandmother had died at that hour. The effect of that experience on its

subject offers a curious example of perverted logic. "Depuis ce moment," he concludes, "comme je m'étais adressé a Dieu pour me conserver ma grand'mère longtemps, et qu'il ne m'a pas exaucé, j'ai cessé avec raison de croire en lui."

CHAPTER IV

SPONTANEOUS THOUGHT TRANSFERENCE: COINCIDENT DREAMS

THE belief that in sleep are revealed things hidden from the common daylight is coeval probably with the beginnings of human history. The savage cult of spirits and the belief in survival after death are traced by modern anthropologists to the mysterious visions of dream-life. The dreamer and the interpreter of dreams are alike held in high honour amongst primitive races: and it is hardly necessary to remind the reader that soothsaying by dreams is not even yet obsolete in our own and other civilised countries.

Now it may be claimed that the hypothesis of telepathy has given a new meaning to the interpretation of dreams. It was no doubt the frequent occurrence in dreams of mysterious correspondences with things actually happening in the world outside the dreamer's mind which first called attention to the subject: and in sleep, if anywhere, we may expect to find traces of the operation of telepathy, for the quiescence and almost complete freedom from external disturbance which characterise that state are precisely the conditions which are indicated as favourable to the reception of stimuli so weak as are presumably these messages from other minds.

We have evidence, of course, that other stimuli, too faint to make their presence known in the tumult of our waking hours, frequently emerge into consciousness in sleep. In this way we seem to revert in dreamful sleep to a more primitive stage of consciousness, which was ours, perhaps, far back in planetary history, before our lives were sharply divided up into alternating periods of helpless slumber and waking activity. But, though in the study of dreams we may find interesting and valuable illustrations of the working of telepathy, the demonstration of a supersensuous mode of communication between mind and mind rests primarily, as has already been said, upon the experimental results of which brief samples have been given in a previous chapter. For dream-coincidences, however striking, can in themselves afford even less support to the theory than the waking visions dealt with in the last chapter. For this evidential inferiority there are several reasons. In the first place, dreams are as the sands on the seashore in number; many persons have dreams every night of their lives. St. Augustine tells us in his *Confessions* that a wise friend warned him that astrology was a false science. "Of whom," said the Saint, "when I had demanded how then could many true things be foretold of it, he answered me, 'that the force of chance diffused throughout the whole order of things brought this about.'" The force of chance still operates, and undoubtedly many dream-coincidences must be attributed to normal causes. In the second place,

most dreams leave but a slight impression on the mind even of the dreamer ; and the memory of them is usually very vague and elusive. There is a serious risk, therefore, that when the partial correspondence of a dream with some external event comes to be known, the details of the indefinite picture preserved in the memory may be filled in to suit the facts—a process, it may be added, which implies no want of honesty on the part of the narrator ; most of us probably "improve" our dreams unconsciously even on the first telling. Again the indefiniteness of dream memories comes partly from the fact, as already said, that the original impressions are in most cases weak ; partly from the circumstance that the dream, unlike a vision seen with the eyes open, has no relations either in time or space, and forms no part in an associated chain of memories. This last objection does not, of course, apply to dreams which occur in a brief sleep in the daytime ; and it is worthy of note that we have in our collection several remarkable coincidental dreams, of unusual vividness, which have occurred in such brief moments of slumber snatched from the waking hours.

From all this it follows that only those dreams are worthy of record in this connection which were noted down before their correspondence with the event was known, or which were at least told to some one else beforehand. In any case, in a dream-story, the interval between its occurrence and the committal of it to writing should be of the briefest.

Again, dreams are of little account unless the coincidence is very striking, and unless the dreams themselves are distinguished from the common ruck of our nightly visitants by some unusual quality—*e. g.*, by their superior vividness or by the intensity of the emotion which accompanies them.

B even when the dream is well attested, when the experience was unusually vivid, and the coincidence striking, there are many cases in which the dream can be explained by normal causes. There are, for instance, several dreams in our collection dealing with lost property ; a brooch hidden under leaves and loose gravel in the garden, a box of stolen property secreted by burglars in the coal cellar—to quote two instances only—have been recovered through dreams. But in cases of this kind it is probable that the dream may be founded on slight indications actually seen by the eyes, which failed in the crowd of waking sensations to gain attention at the time, and did not actually emerge into consciousness until sleep offered a vacant opportunity. Again, we have a case in which an American bank director was awakened from his sleep by the noise of a heavy explosion, dressed himself, and went out in the town to see what had happened. Notwithstanding the fact that on that very night the safe at a bank thirty miles away in which he had a large interest was blown up by dynamite, I should hesitate, in view of the frequency of unexplained noises, to ascribe a dream

of this kind to telepathy. Again, a neighbour of mine on the night of June 24–25, 1894, dreamt that President Carnot had been assassinated, and told his family before the morning paper which announced the news had been opened. But in a case of that kind it seems possible that the information may have reached the sleeper in his dreams from the shouts of a newsboy, or even from the conversation of passers-by in the street.

The reader will be able to judge for himself how far the examples which follow conform to the standard set up, and how far it is probable that the coincidences described have been due to normal causes.

In the first case to be quoted, two friends, at a distance of some miles from each other, had similar dreams.

The incident bears some resemblance to an experiment in the transference of an imaginary scene. Dr. Gleason's dream, as shown by the entry in her diary, occurred between 2 and 3 A.M. on Wednesday, January 27, 1892. The other percipient's account unfortunately leaves it doubtful whether his dream occurred, as would naturally be inferred from his opening sentence, on the night of Tuesday-Wednesday, or on the night of Monday-Tuesday. In any case it seems clear that both the dreams had already taken place before the dreamers met: and the details of the dreams are so bizarre that it is difficult to suppose that they could both arise independently.

No. 21. From Dr. Adele A. Gleason[1]

The Gleason Sanitarium, Elmira, N. Y., February, 1892.

The night of Tuesday, January 26, 1892, I dreamed between two and three o'clock that I stood in a lonesome place in dark woods; that great fear came on me; that a presence as of a man well known to me came and shook a tree by me, and that its leaves began to turn to flame.

The dream was so vivid that I said to the man of whom I dreamed when I saw him four days later, "I had a very strange dream Tuesday night." He said, "Do not tell it to me; let me describe it, for I *know* I dreamed the same thing."

He then *without suggestion* from me duplicated the dream, which he knew, from the time of waking from it, took place at the same hour of the same night.

Adele A. Gleason.

Dr. Gleason was so impressed by the dream that on the following morning she made an entry in her diary: "Night of dream. J. R. J." (Mr. Joslyn's initials.) The diary was sent to Dr. Hodgson for his inspection.

The account of the second dreamer, written a few days later, is as follows:

From Mr. John R. Joslyn, Attorney-at-Law

208 East Water Street, Elmira, N. Y.

On Tuesday, January 26, 1892, I dreamed that in a lonely wood where sometimes I hunted game and was walking along after dark, I found a friend standing some ten feet in the bushes away from the road, apparently paralysed with fear of something invisible to me, and almost completely stupefied by the sense of danger. I went to the side of my friend and shook the bush, when the falling leaves turned into flame.

On meeting this friend, a lady, some days afterwards, she mentioned having had a vivid dream on Tuesday morning,

[1] *Journal*, S. P. R., June, 1895, p. 105.

and I said "Let me tell you mine first," and without suggestion I related the duplicate of her dream.

I was awakened soon after, and noted the time from a certain night train on a railroad near by, and so am certain that the dreams took place at same hour of same night.

J. R. Joslyn.

It would seem here that a kind of nightmare experience of the one dreamer was by sympathy transferred to the other.

The next example, again, bears some resemblance to our experimental cases, but in the present instance the distance between agent and percipient —if we adopt the telepathic explanation—was some five hundred miles.

No. 22. From Mrs. Krekel[1]

[Mrs. Krekel, an associate of the American Branch of the S. P. R., was in November, 1893, staying with an old friend, Mrs. McKenzie. On the early morning of the 23rd November she heard a loud rap upon the headboard of the bed; and after relapsing again into a condition of half-sleep, saw a large envelope, with a mourning border, thrust before her face. She related her experience to her friend in the morning. The following day she left her friend's house; and on the next day —Saturday the 25th—received a telegram announcing her mother's death.

The following letter was written by Mrs. Krekel to her hostess a week after the visionary experience.]

Rockport, Ill., November 30, 1893.

Dear Mrs. McKenzie,—The enclosed telegram, which I would like you to return again to me, will explain the sad errand upon which I was called to Rockport, only two days after my somewhat remarkable experience at your place.

[1] *Journal*, S. P. R., June, 1895.

You will remember that it was Wednesday night, November 22nd, that I heard the loud rap upon head of my bed, and had the arm thrust over my shoulder, handing me the envelope with mourning border and death upon it. Saturday morning, at Hamburg, Iowa, three days afterwards, the enclosed message came to me. Now I must tell you some other particulars connected with it, which are part, and a remarkable part, of the occurrence and experience.

My mother was taken ill Wednesday night, soon after going to bed,—a difficulty in breathing, which she had experienced more or less since an attack of "la grippe" four years ago. She occupied and slept in her own part of the house, shut away from my brother and sister-in-law by two doors,—the folding doors of the parlour which was her living room and her bedroom door opening off her living room. She told my sister Mary, who was sent for the next morning and stayed with her until she died, that she disliked to disturb the family, knowing that they were ill (both brother and his wife were down with "grippe"), and she resolved to go through the night without calling them; but along towards morning became so ill that she tried to call them, *rapped upon a stand standing at the head of bed, and upon the headboard, until she aroused them.*

Now, that I heard my dear old mother rapping for help *across three states*, I have no more doubt than I have that I am writing to you of the occurrence now.

My sister tells me that she was likely struck with death from the first. Her hands and feet were deathly cold, but she did not know it, said she was comfortable, "that she was going," and was glad, "was happy."

MATTIE P. KREKEL.

The telegram is dated November 25, 1893, and announces that the death had occurred at four o'clock that morning. November 22nd, 1893, was a Wednesday, as stated.

The following was Mrs. McKenzie's reply to Mrs. Krekel:

QUITMAN, Mo., December 6, 1893.

I opened your letter in the presence of my husband, son, and daughter. I read the telegram first. My surprise caused me to relate the occurrence of Wednesday night, November 22nd, as you had told me in the morning. Lottie told her father that you told her the same thing after breakfast. Then I read your letter, and there was the same. A loud rap upon the head of your bed, waking you up, an arm thrust over your shoulder, handing you an envelope with a black border, with death upon it. I cannot forget your excitement and sadness, caused by the occurrence.

ELLEN E. MCKENZIE.

Mrs. Krekel, it should be added, explains that she was in no anxiety about her mother at the time: "As far as I knew, my mother was in better health than a year before." She added that the distance between her mother and herself at the time of the vision was five hundred miles.

In the next case the coincidence was of a much more striking character, and the dream, again, was sufficiently vivid to awaken the dreamer.

No. 23.

Mr. H. B., an undergraduate of —— College, Cambridge, wrote on the 6th October, 1901, to Mr. Piddington:

. . . I thought you might possibly be interested in a coincidence which took place at the end of August last. I am attached to a certain young lady. At the time I refer to I was staying near Peterboro' and the lady in question was at her home, a seaside town in Yorkshire. One very close thundery night I

found some difficulty in getting to sleep. When finally I fell asleep, or rather dozed, the face of Miss D. rose up before me, and to my surprise one side of her face was very much swollen and she looked very unhappy. I sat up in bed and spoke to her, only to find that I had been dreaming. Again I fell asleep and dreamt that I was walking along a street, when I heard a cry above me, and looking up saw Miss D.'s face at a window from which smoke and flames were issuing. I rushed upstairs, only to see her face floating in the smoke, very much swollen. I tried to grasp her, and woke up with a cry. Somehow the dream depressed me, and next day in writing to Miss D. I told her the whole thing, much as I have told you. Imagine my surprise a day after, when I heard from her that on the night in question she had gone out to see a house on fire—Mrs. K.'s seaside residence; had contracted a chill, and gone to bed with her face enormously swollen up, and had suffered severe toothache all night. Our letters on the subject will confirm dates, etc. . . . H. B.

A few days later Mr. H. B. called on Mrs. Verrall, who ascertained that the dream occurred on the night of Sunday, August 25th. On the following day Mr. H. B., to quote from Mrs. Verrall's notes of her interview with him,

wrote to Miss D. to ask if she had had a toothache, but on second thoughts decided that it would make him feel foolish if nothing had occurred, and so tore up the letter. On a later day in the week he was writing to her about other things, and then mentioned his vivid dream about the swollen face (this part of the business evidently impressed him much more than the fire). But before he sent this letter he received one from her mentioning that she had been suffering from a severe toothache and swollen face since Sunday night. This letter I have seen; it is dated from Filey, on "Wednesday" (obviously August 28th), and begins by saying that she is sorry not to have written before, but has been "seedy ever since

Sunday. I think I must have got a chill; anyhow, I had raging toothache from Sunday night till " the day before, when she had the tooth out with gas. The letter went on to give a graphic description, with a sketch, of her appearance during the time that her face was swollen.

On the receipt of this letter, H. B. was so much astonished to find that his dream about the swollen face was true that he added a postscript to his letter (which had not yet gone) to say that he had seen her with a swollen face at a window from which smoke was coming, and to ask if that part of the dream was also true.

Her letter in answer to that I have also seen. It is dated from Filey on August 31, 1901, and I copy the important part :—" I was awfully interested in your dream ; it is the queerest thing I have heard of for ages. The funny part of it is that I got the cold which made my toothache so bad by going out on Sunday evening, hearing that there was a fire on the Crescent. It was Mrs. K.'s house ; one of the bedrooms got on fire. It was nothing much, and was put out before the Fire Brigade arrived. . . . Auntie M. first noticed smoke coming out of the window." The writer goes on to say (and this seems to me very interesting), " M. gave me a sleeping powder on Sunday night, so I slept heavily, in spite of the pain." She also says that she thought about him a good deal on Monday night when she had seen what a sight she was, but not on Sunday.[1]

The case is interesting, not only from the detailed nature of the coincidence, but because it illustrates one of the chief obstacles to obtaining good evidence in cases of this kind. The letter

[1] *Journal*, S. P. R., July, 1902, p. 263. A case very similar to Mr. H. B.'s will be found in my *Apparitions and Thought Transference* (p. 200). The percipient in that case, Sir Edward Hamilton, K.C.B., had a vision of his brother with his arm seriously affected, horribly red, and bent back at the wrist. The date of the dream is attested by a note in the percipient's diary.

which Mr. H. B. had actually written on the Monday was not sent, through fear of ridicule. Sometimes it is a feeling of quite a different order which stands in the way of a written note being made. Thus, Miss G. had a dream of her brother dying in his berth on board ship. Miss G. was so convinced that her brother was dead (in fact he died about twelve hours later), that she ceased to send her usual letters to him ; but, in place of making a written note of an experience which she felt too sacred for the purpose, she kept an invitation card to a children's party to remind her of the exact date.[1] In another case, in which a child of fourteen saw the apparition of a young man of about nineteen on the day of his death, the percipient told no one of her experience, save her sister who was present at the time; and adds, "Although I wished to put it down in my diary (which I had not kept for some time), I was afraid to do so; I therefore made marks to remind myself."[2]

In the last case, it will be observed, the vision was a waking hallucination, a much more impressive experience than a dream, and one much more likely therefore to be recorded. But we have some statistics to show that even hallucinations are very rarely recorded beforehand. Out of sixty-two hallucinations coincident with a death, obtained through the Census enquiry, a written note is said to have

[1] *Journal*, S. P. R., December, 1894.

[2] I have seen the "mark" in the diary—a simple triangle with no comment of any kind.

been made before news of the death in six cases only. In only one—the narrative just cited—has the note actually been preserved, and this, as has been shown, in an ambiguous form. There are altogether 1942 hallucinations reported in the Census enquiry, and in only forty-nine of these, *i. e.*, 2.5 per cent., is any record (diary or letter) said to have been written within twenty-four hours of the occurrence.[1] We can hardly expect therefore that a note of a dream will be made at the time, unless the percipient should happen to be specially interested in the subject.

In the following case also the correspondence between the dream and the event appears to have been very detailed; though in one important particular, the identity of the person in the water, the dreamer was at fault.

No. 24. From Miss C. Clarkson[2]

Alverthorpe Hall, Wakefield
May 8th, 1894.

On Sunday, May 5th, 1894,[3] my sister and I were boating on the river Derwent, in Yorkshire (near Kirkham Abbey), with a party of friends in a small steam launch. Between 3 and 4 o'clock in the afternoon, we had all landed to gather cowslips in the fields, and on returning to the boat, for some reason the usual plank for landing was not in position, and we jumped in turn from the bank on to the flat end of the boat. I was the last, and in jumping missed my footing and slipped

[1] *Proceedings*, S. P. R., vol. x., pp. 211 and 220. Of course only a small proportion of the 1942 hallucinations showed any correspondence with a death or other event.

[2] *Journal*, S. P. R., July, 1895.

[3] The first Sunday in May, 1894, was really the 6th.

into the water, catching the edge of the boat, however, with my hands as I went, and supporting myself—so that I was not totally immersed, though the water was a good depth where we were. Two of the gentlemen rushed forward and pulled me out by my arms. I said as I was being hauled up, "It is no use pulling so hard, you hurt me." One of them said, "We *must* pull, if we are to get you out." I was got on to the boat in a very short time, and was never in any danger.

We returned to our own home the next day, and never mentioned in the slightest way the little accident to any one, lest my father, who is a very old man, should be alarmed or worried at what had happened. Shortly after we returned, my step-mother said *to my sister*, "Have you had an accident on the river?" "I? No," said my sister. [Mrs. Clarkson then related her dream.]

According to my step-mother's account, my father also seemed to have been a little anxious and uneasy in his sleep that night, and in the morning rather pointedly asked her if she had dreamt anything, but said nothing further; and nothing was afterwards said to him to make him aware of what had happened. My step-mother's dream was during the night after the accident occurred.

CHRISTABEL CLARKSON.

Miss Clarkson adds:

I have asked Mrs. Clarkson if she ever had any other dreams of the kind, but she says not.

The following is Mrs. Clarkson's account of her dream:

May 14th, 1894.

On Sunday night, May 6th, 1894, [I had] a dream which appeared remarkable; in effect, was this—that Louisa Clarkson was in the water apparently drowned, and I said, "Take care, or you will go," and pulled her in by her hair. Her answer was, "Do not pull so hard, you hurt me." I still pulled, saying, "You had better be hurt than drowned." The

following day, on her return home, I inquired of her if she had an accident during her visit. She said, "Well, something like one; my sister got into the water and used just the same words, 'Don't pull so hard, you hurt me.'" Her answer to me was, "Well, it is strange."

ANNIE PILKINGTON CLARKSON.

P. S.—I inquired of Louisa before hearing a word of the accident.

Miss Louisa Clarkson also gives her confirmation of the incident. Here, it will be seen, the dream occurred some hours after the accident. It may be suggested that it was caused by Miss Clarkson or her sister recalling the scene at night. Or, again, the impression may have been conveyed to Mrs. Clarkson at the actual time of the accident, but have remained latent until a favourable opportunity came for its emergence into consciousness.[1]

A dream related to us by Mr. G. R. Sims furnishes a parallel for the mistake in the identity of the chief actor in the dream-drama. Mr. Sims dreamt that his sister came to tell him of his father's death. In the morning, after he had awakened from the dream, Miss Sims actually came, but the death which she announced was that of his brother-in-law.[2]

A very large number of coincident dreams, as might have been anticipated on the telepathic theory, are connected with death. The following may be cited as a typical case.

[1] See below, Case 41, Chapter VI.

[2] *Journal*, S. P. R., October, 1899.

No. 25. From Mrs. Mann[1]

King's Field, Cambridge, 11th Feb., 1904.

On the night of Friday, January 22nd, 1904, I had a vivid dream.

I saw my old friend, Dr. X., who left Cambridge about ten years ago, and I had not seen him since, sitting by my side. He took hold of my hand, saying, "Why have you not been to see me?" I said, "Oh! I've been so busy that I've not been able to get away. You are so altered since I saw you last." "Yes," he said, "but that is so long ago." He then disappeared. The dream so impressed me that I told it to my husband at breakfast the next morning, Saturday, 23rd, and also to a friend who knew the doctor, on the 25th.

On Saturday morning, the 30th, my husband at breakfast said he had received a memorial notice of Dr. X.'s death, which took place on the 23rd instant, the day after my dream.

S. Mann.
A. H. Mann.

Dr. Mann appends his signature to the account in corroboration. Mrs. Mann explained to Mrs. H. Sidgwick that Dr. X.'s hair and whiskers when she last saw him were iron grey, but that in her dream they appeared white. From Dr. X.'s son we learn that his whiskers were not quite white and his hair only tinged with white. In any case little weight could be attached to a correspondence of this kind.

Dr. X. died at 4.30 A.M. on the 23rd January, 1904, so that it is possible that the dream exactly coincided with the hour of the death.

The exact date of the dream is fixed by a note

[1] *Journal*, S. P. R., June, 1905.

in Dr. Mann's diary, "Jan. 23rd, X [full surname given] dream."

A narrative is quoted in the *Journal* for December, 1895 (p. 178), in which the occurrence of a dream presaging a death was noted in a diary before the news was received. In another case, printed in the *Journal* for November, 1897, a letter relating the dream was sent to Dr. Hodgson before news of the event was received.

We have several cases reported to us of dreams coincident with external events in which it is difficult to apply the theory of thought transference, since no person is indicated as the probable agent. Thus we have two or three cases in which a robbery has been seen in a dream, in which the only conceivable agent would appear to be the malefactor, presumably unknown to the dreamer, and certainly a reluctant party to the experiment.[1]

In other cases the death intimated in the dream is that of some eminent personage — President, Duke, or professional cricketer. In view of the incalculable scope offered by dreams for chance coincidence, and the danger, when the experience has not been actually written down at once, that the amount of correspondence with the event may be

[1] A very striking example of this class is the "prophetic" dream of the murder of Terriss, the actor. I have dealt with it under the head of prophecy, because the dream did actually precede the murder by some hours. But the least incredible explanation which I can suggest for the dream—which on any interpretation presents us with a difficult problem—is that the percipient's experience was inspired by the brooding thoughts of the actual murderer, a discharged super, personally unknown to him. See below, Chapter XIV., No. 76.

unduly magnified, it would not be wise to attach much importance to coincident dreams of this character. But the reader may be interested in seeing a specimen case.

An account of the incident described was sent to Mr. Andrew Lang on the 4th December, 1901, by Mr. Alexander Bell of the Sheffield *Daily Telegraph*. On the 11th Mr. Bell wrote again, enclosing an account from Mr. Brierley, the dreamer:

No. 26. From Mr. J. A. Brierley[1]

Mr. Bell kindly tells me that you are much interested in my dream concerning the death of Lohmann, and for what it may be worth I have pleasure in briefly relating what happened.

Shortly before seven o'clock on the morning of December 2nd I awoke, but, not being under the necessity of rising early, I went off to sleep again, and it was during this period that I dreamt Lohmann had died—I had no impression where, although I knew he was in South Africa—and I had to write a sketch of his career. I saw him playing again, and he was focussed very clearly before me in the act of delivering the ball. This, with a memory of the first match in which I ever saw him,—the second match between the sixth Australian team and Shaw and Shrewsbury's Eleven that had been in the Antipodes the previous year, played at Old Trafford on September 13, 14, and 15, 1888, when he and Briggs dismissed the whole side for 35,—left a very vivid impression upon me when I awakened, and although I attached no significance to the dream, remembering the nature of my work, I mentioned the incident to my wife when I got down. At that time, of course, news of Lohmann's death was in the papers, but as I had left the office the previous evening by half-past nine, at which hour the cable message had not come through, I was in ignorance of it. Curiously enough, I did not see a paper that morning

[1] *Journal*, S. P. R., May, 1902.

until I reached the office, and the first words that were addressed to me were, "Do you know George Lohmann is dead?"

I had not sought to trace any meaning to it, looking upon it merely as a remarkable coincidence, but, as was pointed out by one of my colleagues to whom I mentioned what had occurred, the strange part of the matter is that since he left England after the tour of the South Africans in this country, nothing had appeared to in any way revive memories of him at such a time. J. A. Brierley.

Through the kindness of Mr. Bell, we obtained later the following corroboration from Mrs. Brierley; this was enclosed in a letter dated December 23rd, 1901:

All that I can say with regard to Mr. Brierley's account of his dream is that, just before sitting down to breakfast on the morning he mentions, he alluded to the fact that he had had a singular fancy in his sleep—that he had dreamt Lohmann, the cricketer, was dead, that he had to write an obituary notice of him, and other things which he has detailed in his own communication. That he did so relate this to me at that time, I have the clearest recollection.

(Signed) Louie Brierley.

The telegram announcing Lohmann's death, as we learn from Mr. Bell, did not reach the office of the *Telegraph* until after midnight on Sunday, 1st December.

Here, whatever significance we may attach to the coincidence, it is at least worth noting that the dream made a sufficient impression to induce the percipient to relate it the next morning.

In the narratives hitherto cited the coincidence has been of a perfectly definite character, and the

dream has, with the doubtful exception of case No. 22, been referred at the time to the presumed agent. Before leaving the subject, however, mention should perhaps be made of the class of symbolic dreams—a survival of the occult art of the interpretation of dreams. Many cases have been reported to us in which dreams of a particular type are apt to recur with certain persons, indicating, either by way of coincidence or forewarning, the occurrence of a death in their immediate circle. It is difficult for us in such cases to share our informant's confidence that a dream of this kind is causally connected with the death, partly because the dream as a rule is not referred at the time to any particular person, and the scope for coincidence is thus very wide; but mainly because it is rarely possible, even with the most scrupulous narrator, to feel satisfied that all the "misses" have been recorded as well as the "hits." In the following case, however, though the dream did not actually suggest at the time the death of Mrs. Medley, it called up the thought of her. The dream, it will be seen, was preceded by a series of waking impressions. It should be added that dreams of these offensive parasites, or of teeth falling out, are amongst the commonest types of symbolic death-dreams.

No. 27. From Mrs. Knight

Heathlands, Malvern Wells, 20th April, 1897[1]

I was staying at Udny Castle, in Aberdeenshire, on a visit,

[1] *Journal*, S. P. R., October, 1897. The account was actually written down, as stated at the end of the letter, a few days after the occurrence.

and was going on for another visit to Lytham, in Lancashire, on the 18th of September, 1895. I had wished Mr. and Mrs. Udny and the friends in the house good-bye when I went to bed, knowing I should have to make a very early start in the morning. So I had the curtains drawn and the shutters shut to make the room dark and to get a good night's sleep.

But I woke up with the feeling of being gently wakened ; I was swayed, or rather rocked backwards and forwards, till I felt the bed to see if that were moving, and then I was gently and quietly raised up. The air fluttered over my head, a shimmering light came, and I felt some one was detained, lingering and hovering over me. To myself, I said : "Some one is dying ; some one I know is leaving this world and blessing me" ; and then the hovering and the fluttering were greater. Then, aloud, as if some one were willing me (for I never speak aloud to myself), I said : "If dear Med were here she would tell me at once who it is." As if in answer came a rap by the head of my bed, a rap I have never heard before, and was certainly not made by human hands. I jumped out of bed, and said, "Who am I to see?" I lit my candle, and looked at my watch, and it was seven minutes past three. I put the candle out, and was getting into bed, when I thought, "How can I rest while a soul I know is passing from this world?" and I knelt down and said a prayer for the soul. I never thought it was my dear nurse, Mrs. Medley, whom I always called "Med," but I thought of a friend I knew in Warwickshire.

After I got into bed and put the candle out, there was a light I cannot describe all round my bed. It was a silvery radiance, and as it passed away flashes of gold and gold stars fell. About five I went to sleep for half an hour, but woke up with my hand on my neck trying to take off a flat black insect. . . . One seemed on my forehead, one on my neck, and I said again aloud : "This is dear Med's Death Dream ; how interested she will be to hear it. *Who* could have died this morning?" Mrs. Medley had always told me that dreaming of insects on the head and neck was a certain sign

of death, and I never liked her saying this, but never believed it.

I was travelling from 6.30 that morning, and arrived at Lytham about 8 P.M., when I was met at the station by my friend, with a telegram in her hand, saying, "My dear, I have very sad news for you." And I answered, "Then it was dear Med." And she said, "Oh, I am so glad you were prepared. We feared from the telegram it would be such an awful shock to you." I answered. "I was not prepared, only I know it all now."

I took the first train in the next morning to Malvern Wells, where we were living, and at that station was met and told my dear nurse had died at three. I said, "No, it was later." On arriving at the house my sister said she had looked at the watch, and the hands were between *five and ten minutes past three.* It was *seven minutes past three* when I looked at my watch on that morning.

The day before she had been very well, and my sisters had taken her for a drive round Upton-on-Severn, but she was constantly talking of me, and saying, "I am not happy about Etta. She is not well; I want to see her."

I had not said in any letters that I was not well, but I had not been very well.

She was the dearest and truest friend I have ever had, or ever can have. She was my sisters' and my nurse, and had been in my father's service before I was born. . . .

HENRIETTA KNIGHT.

In a letter to Mr. Myers, enclosing the account, Mrs. Knight writes:

HEATHLANDS, MALVERN WELLS, April 20th [1897].

. . . I was so afraid of imagining or forgetting, that the day I arrived home I wrote the bare facts, which I have copied for you. I have simply copied down what I wrote.

Mrs. Knight adds that she had no knowledge of

Mrs. Medley's illness: and that "the love between her and me was greater than the love between many a mother and child."

It will be seen that the idea of death had been already summoned up by the previous waking experience, and that the dream simply embodied the same idea in the traditional symbolic imagery—a tradition closely associated in the dreamer's mind with the idea of the dying woman.

CHAPTER V

ON HALLUCINATIONS IN GENERAL

NONE of the obscure phenomena dealt with by the Society for Psychical Research have excited more attention, and been more widely misinterpreted, than the apparitions of the dying which form the subject-matter of the next chapter. Such apparitions are reported to have occurred far back in the world's annals. Some historical instances will no doubt occur to the reader. The memory of a mental attitude now outgrown is apt to be short-lived, and it is perhaps not superfluous to point out that until some twenty or thirty years ago, say, there were only two explanations of such occurrences commonly recognised. By the majority of the educated classes they were dismissed as mere inventions of the popular imagination, like the tales of elves, nymphs, fauns, hobgoblins, and the whole tribe of fairyland. In the belief of the people they were held to be what they seemed, the authentic appearances of the dead—*certissimæ mortis imagines.* Even now the endorsement of these dubious shapes by the Society for Psychical Research has done more, probably, than anything else to prejudice our investigations. Those who have themselves discarded the heritage of a primeval animism can

hardly bring themselves to credit that we also are to that extent emancipated ; and the implicit assumption that we regard such appearances as in some sense a part of the dying man, a double, an astral body, a visible soul, still prevails in some quarters.

Let it be understood, then, that in this and the following chapter the apparitions or "ghosts" of which instances will be cited are regarded primarily as hallucinations. A hallucination is a sensory perception which corresponds to no sensory reality[1]; it is a creation of the brain ; in the case of a visual hallucination we may describe it as the final member in a series of which intermediate terms can be traced in the half realised pictures that flit before our waking thought in every act of memory ; the imagery which fills our consciousness in dreams ; and the mind's eye visions so frequently seen by artists and others with a vivid imagination, of which some telepathic examples have been cited in Chapter III. A hallucination may be roughly described as a waking dream ; and it is for our purpose more interesting and more significant than a dream only because it is a much rarer phenomenon, and because the circumstance that it takes a place amongst the imagery of the external world seen by the waking eyes makes it likely to be more certainly remembered and more accurately recorded.

But to most persons the word "hallucination" still carries with it some implication of disease.

[1] More accurately, to adopt Edmund Gurney's definition, a hallucination is "a percept which lacks, but can only by distinct reflection be recognised as lacking, the objective basis which it suggests."

The man in the street when he hears the word probably thinks of Huxley's Mrs. A., and of Goethe's butt, Nicolai, the Berlin bookseller: and in both these cases the hallucinations were symptoms of maladies for which the sufferers were under medical treatment. It is only within the last generation that even medical men have come to recognise that hallucinations may occur amongst sane and healthy people; that they are indeed of much more frequent occurrence, say, than smallpox or typhoid fever, and that they may imply no greater functional disturbance than a toothache or a cold. For within the last generation our knowledge of the subject has been increased by two methods. In the first place an increasing familiarity with hypnotism has enabled us to reproduce hallucinations at will. A subject in the somnambulic stage of the hypnotic sleep will not merely see and hear what he is bidden to see or hear at the time; but will also, in obedience to the experimenter's suggestion, summon up like unsubstantial visions after the trance has terminated. I have seen a lady, some time after being awakened, gratefully accept a blank card as a photograph of a friend: I have myself persuaded an educated man, in full possession apparently of his normal senses, to mistake blue for green and yellow for pink. That hallucinations thus imposed are really seen there can be little doubt; they are even amenable in some cases to the usual optical tests, and can be magnified by a lens, or reflected in a mirror, or give rise to after-images. With a good subject there is

apparently no limit to this power to perceive suggested hallucinations. Edmund Gurney, following the example of some Continental hypnotists, caused by this means a lifelike apparition of himself to appear to an astonished servant girl.[1]

But the spontaneous hallucinations of normal healthy persons are more pertinent to our present enquiry than these post-somnambulic visions. The late Professor Sidgwick, at the instance of the Congress of Experimental Psychology which met in Paris in 1889, with the aid of a committee of members of the Society for Psychical Research, instituted a census of spontaneous hallucinations of the sane. In the course of three or four years 17,000 persons, the greater part resident in the United Kingdom, were questioned on the subject.[2] The results showed that 655 out of 8372 men, and 1029 out of 8628 women, or 9.9 per cent. of the

[1] *Proceedings*, S. P. R., vol. v., pp. 11–13. The girl had no recollection in the waking state of the suggestion given in the trance, and was much astonished and a little frightened at the apparition which came down the kitchen stairs. She went at once to tell her mistress.

[2] The question was worded as follows: "Have you ever, when believing yourself to be completely awake, had a vivid impression of seeing, or being touched by, a living being or inanimate object, or of hearing a voice; which impression, so far as you could discover, was not due to any external physical cause?"

It should be added that the greatest care was taken to ensure the accuracy and representative character of the answers. The collectors, who all gave their services gratuitously, numbered 410: they included, besides members of the Society for Psychical Research, many medical men, trained psychologists, teachers, and others. Nine tenths of them were educated up to the standard of the professional classes, and all were carefully instructed in their duties. Answers were obtained on schedules printed for the purpose in batches of 25, and it was a special instruction that no selection of answers should be made, but that all answers, whether *Yes* or *No*, should be regarded

whole number, had experienced a sensory hallucination at some time in their lives; many more than once. Of the whole number of hallucinations about two thirds affected the sense of sight, the remainder being concerned with hearing and touch. It is the visual hallucinations, however, which most concern us, and the following table gives an analysis of the things represented in the 1112[1] visions, the conditions under which they were seen, and the period in which they are recorded as having been seen.

as of equal importance. The work was of necessity somewhat tedious, and the whole enquiry, as said, extended over about four years. But the results are believed to be as nearly accurate as any extensive enquiry of the kind could furnish. That apart from the influence of forgetfulness, discussed in the text, the results were not entirely accurate is indicated by the fact that the census papers handed in by members of the Society for Psychical Research committee and by medical men and psychologists showed a distinctly higher proportion of affirmative answers, viz.: 9% from men, and 17.1% from women, or 12.8 for both sexes. This probably indicates that the expert questioner gave rather more time to the enquiry, and exacted from the persons questioned a more searching interrogation of their memory. As a contrast with the method pursued by our committee, it may be mentioned that the French astronomer, M. Flammarion, inserted a similar question in several Parisian papers, asking readers in the event of their having had no such impressions, to reply to him on a post-card. In the event he received 2456 negative and 1824 affirmative answers; of the latter over 90% were coincidental. On the figures so obtained M. Flammarion thinks himself justified in arguing as follows:

"If these things were hallucinations, illusions, freaks of the imagination, the number of those not coinciding with a death would be considerably greater than the number which do so coincide. Now we find the contrary has been the case. My enquiry proves it to demonstration. I asked my readers to be good enough to send me all cases, whether coincidental or not. [Of the cases sent] there were not more than seven or eight per cent. of apparitions without coincidences. Precisely the reverse ought to have been the case if we were dealing with hallucinations" (*L'Inconnu, et les problèmes psychiques*, p. 222).

[1] About 300 cases in which the details of the experience were given only at second-hand are excluded from this total.

VISUAL HALLUCINATIONS[1]

			Within the last 10 years	More than 10 years ago	Undated	Totals
Realistic Human Apparitions	Of Living Persons	Immediately after waking	16	24	3	43
		Awake in bed	31	43	3	77
		Up	78	64	7	149
		Out of doors	31	31	8	70
		Unstated	1	4	8	13
		Totals	157	166	29	352
	Of Dead Persons	Immediately after waking	5	3	—	8
		Awake in bed	19	25	2	46
		Up	26	42	6	74
		Out of doors	9	10	—	19
		Unstated	3	5	8	16
		Totals	62	85	16	163
	Unrecognised	Immediately after waking	18	10	8	36
		Awake in bed	31	54	5	90
		Up	47	42	22	111
		Out of doors	30	33	4	67
		Unstated	—	1	10	11
		Totals	126	140	49	315
Incompletely Developed Apparitions		Immediately after waking	12	12	—	24
		Awake in bed	19	29	2	50
		Up	23	20	4	47
		Out of doors	5	12	2	19
		Unstated	1	1	1	3
		Totals	60	74	9	143
All other Visual Hallucinations		Immediately after waking	9	5	4	18
		Awake in bed	3	24	4	31
		Up	27	22	8	57
		Out of doors	14	12	—	26
		Unstated	2	1	4	7
		Totals	55	64	20	139

[1] *Proceedings*, S. P. R., vol. x., p. 45.

It will be seen that three quarters of the visual hallucinations represented a lifelike human figure, in the majority of cases known to the percipient. It will further be noted that, in view of the comparatively short period of our waking hours spent in bed, a disproportionately large number of the hallucinations occurred under such conditions—a fact due no doubt largely to the quiescence and freedom from disturbance obtaining.

Apart from their interest for psychologists generally as representing an incursion into a field hitherto practically unexplored—the hallucinations of sane and healthy persons[1]—the results of the census have an important bearing upon the evidence for the telepathic hypothesis. As already pointed out, in most experiments at close quarters we can calculate with some approach to exactness the probabilities against the results coinciding by chance;

[1] The question "Were you in good health?" was asked of all those who replied "Yes" to the census enquiry. It appears that of the hallucinations included in the census ill-health was present in 123 cases, or between 7 and 8 per cent. But the ill-health was in most cases of a quite minor character—"nervous and dyspeptic" or "a little below par" being typical descriptions. The hallucinations dealt with are, therefore, not due in the majority of cases to ill-health. Nor are they due, in most cases, to emotional disturbances: grief, anxiety, depression, etc., are recorded as being present in only 220 cases out of the 1622—or between 13 and 14 per cent.

It should be added that these hallucinations of the sane present marked differences from the hallucinations observed to be associated with disease or insanity. The census hallucinations are mostly isolated and trivial experiences; they carry with them, as a rule, no feeling of terror or disgust; and in their realistic appearance and other details they differ markedly from hallucinations associated with, *e. g.* visceral diseases. (See the Goulstonian Lectures for 1901, by Henry Head, M. D., and Mr. Piddington's review, *Proceedings*, S. P. R., vol. xix., p. 267.)

our difficulty in such cases is to eliminate the possible operation of hyperæsthesia, etc. But when, as in case No. 33, Prince Duleep Singh sees the vision of his father who is dying hundreds of miles away, we know that no intimation or anticipation of the death can have reached him by normal means. But we are not therefore entitled to assume a causal connection between the hallucination and the death. Though not so common as dreams, hallucinations, it may be objected, are of sufficiently frequent occurrence to render a chance coincidence not impossible. To justify the inference that the Prince's vision, and the other similar visions preserved in our records, really point to a causal connection with the death of the person represented, we must be able to show that coincidences of this kind are more numerous than the frequency of non-coincident hallucinations would account for. The census gives us the material for the calculation required. But the figures cannot, it must be premised, be taken at their face value. If we turn again to the table quoted on page 104 we shall note, as a significant fact, that the hallucinations recorded as occurring during the previous ten years approach pretty nearly to the sum of all the rest. Further, on a closer analysis of the records the committee found that the most recent year was more prolific than the rest of the decade; the most recent quarter again was more prolific than the other quarters; the most recent month more prolific than the rest of the quarter. It is clear that

forgetfulness has seriously vitiated the results. After a careful estimate of all the circumstances the committee came to the conclusion that to arrive at the actual number of hallucinations experienced by the persons questioned, the numbers given should be multiplied by at least 4, and possibly more.[1]

If we include only recognised and realistic apparitions of the human figure, and subtract all doubtful cases, all cases occurring before the age of ten, and all cases where the percipient had more than one similar experience, we find that we have 322 cases to deal with. Multiplied by 4, these amount to 1288, or in round numbers 1300. But of the 322 we find 62[2] coincided with a death—*i. e.*, occurred within twelve hours, on one side or the other, of the death of the person represented. Now of the 62 death coincidences, 11 are reported as occurring in the previous ten years, and 51 before that date. So far from being forgotten, the hallucinations coinciding with death appear to be remembered too well. It is clear that as the experience recedes into the past the closeness of the coincidence is apt to be magnified, or the narrative in some other way unconsciously improved.[3] After

[1] For details of the estimate see *Proceedings*, S. P. R., vol. x., pp. 62–69.

[2] Actually 65, but three of the cases are strongly suspected of having been "imported" into the census—*i. e.*, the persons who collected the answers in these three cases knew of the vision beforehand, and it is believed that but for this knowledge they would not have questioned these particular persons. These cases are therefore excluded from the calculation.

[3] The average age of the narrators of death coincidences is 46 (that of our informants generally being only 40), so that as experiences under 10 years

making liberal allowance for this unconscious exaggeration, and for another disturbing cause—the possible influence of selection on the results,[1]—the probable number of death coincidences is reduced to 30.

We have then these 30 coincidences with death in 1300 apparitions. But the death rate for the last completed decade (1881–1890) of the period under review was 19.15—*i. e.*, the probability that any person taken at random would die within any given 24 hours was 19.15 in 365,000 = about 1 in 19,000. If there is no causal connection between the hallucination and the death, we should find but 1 coincidence in 19,000—we actually find 1 in 43.

We may dismiss, then, the suggestion of explanation by chance coincidence. But it need hardly be said that we are not, therefore, entitled to claim that we have found an irrefragable proof of telepathy. The coincidences, it is true, did not occur by chance, if the facts have been correctly reported. But on the one hand, the frequency of non-coin-

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of age are excluded, there are 26 years included in the remoter period. If 11 experiences occur in 10 years, we should look for 29 at most in the remaining 26 years—we find 51!

[1] The non-coincidental hallucinations, which are much less interesting, would probably not be known beforehand to the collector; and even if they were, the collector would not be likely to go out of his way to collect such an account. Further, apparitions at the time of death are naturally more talked about, the collectors would probably know of some such amongst their acquaintance, and unless, in recording the answers, they systematically canvassed the whole of the neighbourhood accessible to them, it is almost certain that they would yield to the temptation to "bag" a death coincidence, even though it did not, properly speaking, come within their ground. See *Proceedings*, S. P. R., vol. x., pp. 210 and 243.

cidental hallucinations may be much greater, owing to the operation of forgetfulness, than the census would indicate; on the other hand, there may have been much more exaggeration in the coincidences than we have allowed for.

It is scarcely conceivable that any error in our estimate of the rate of forgetfulness should be sufficient to affect the conclusion to a material extent. To adopt the alternative explanation is to assume, not merely that our informants generally have been guilty of serious inaccuracies, but that the alleged "percipients," together with their friends who have furnished corroborative testimony, have given detailed reports of incidents which never took place, and that in some cases notes have been made in diaries supporting these fictitious reports. In other words, we have to suppose the occurrence of numerous hallucinations, not of sense but of memory, shared in many cases by several members of a household. Such an assumption is perhaps not inconceivable; but it involves violent improbabilities, and it can scarcely at present claim any external support. At any rate those who carefully weigh the evidence will, no doubt, agree that neither assumption will justify us, without further enquiry, in summarily dismissing the incidents reported.[1]

But even if a causal connection between the

[1] For full details of the estimates cited in the text, the reader is referred to the "Report of the Census Committee," *Proceedings*, S. P. R., vol. x., pp. 207–251.

apparition and the death of the person represented is admitted, it is felt by some that the transition from the experimental cases of thought transference to these much more impressive spontaneous appearances is so violent as to render it doubtful whether both sets of phenomena can be referred to the same category. There are two main points in which the coincident hallucinations now under consideration differ from the mass of the experimental evidence: (1) the distance over which the force is assumed to operate is very much greater, (2) in the experimental cases it is the idea actively present to the agent—the image of the card or number—which intrudes into the consciousness of the percipient; but in these other cases the actual percept represents what can at most have occupied but a subordinate place in the thoughts of the presumed agent—to wit, his own personal appearance.

As regards the first point, it is true that in the experimental cases we have little evidence for the operation of telepathy even at a distance of a few miles; and that in most experiments it has been found difficult to secure success even when the two parties were in adjoining rooms. But, as shown in a preceding chapter, there are circumstances which, apart from any actual diminution in the telepathic energy, would militate against success when agent and percipient are no longer in the same room. And in most of the spontaneous cases, it must be remembered, the emotional energy liberated, on which the strength of the telepathic impulse seems

to depend, must be immeasurably greater than in tedious experiments with cards and pictures. To a man whose experience of illumination was restricted to a rushlight it would appear incredible that the same familiar energy could cross the gulf which separates the earth from Sirius.

As regards the second point, the difference in the nature of the impression made upon the percipient's mind may probably throw some light on the mechanism of the transmission. In experimental cases we often meet with the transmission of a detailed scene. It is but rarely in the spontaneous cases—and then as a rule only in dreams or some state analogous to somnambulic clairvoyance—that we find details of the agent's actual appearance and surroundings accurately reflected in the percipient's mind. The apparition commonly consists simply of a figure, clothed as the percipient was accustomed to see the agent clothed; whereas to be true to life the phantasm would as a rule have to appear in bed. In cases where the vision gives no information as to the agent's clothing and surroundings generally—and, as already said, such cases form the great majority of the well attested narratives—we may suppose that what is transmitted is not any part of the superficial content of the agent's consciousness, but an impression from the underlying massive and permanent elements which represent his personal identity. The percipient's imagination is clearly competent to clothe such an impression with appropriate imagery, must

indeed so clothe it if it is to rise into consciousness at all.

But fortunately we are not compelled to make the violent transition referred to; for some of the most remarkable hallucinations of which we have authentic records have been produced experimentally. Some instances of the kind were published in *Phantasms of the Living*. It was after reading the accounts there given that Mr. Clarence Godfrey, a friend of my own, determined to make a similar experiment on his own account. He wrote to me on the 16th November, 1886, as follows:

No. 28. From Mr. Clarence Godfrey[1]

I was so impressed by the account on p. 105 [of *Phantasms of the Living*, vol. i.] that I determined to put the matter to an experiment.

Retiring at 10.45 (on the 15th November, 1886), I determined to appear, if possible, to a friend, and accordingly I set myself to work with all the volitional and determinative energy which I possess to stand at the foot of her bed. I need not say that I never dropped the slightest hint beforehand as to my intention, such as could mar the experiment, nor had I mentioned the subject to her. As the "agent" I may describe my own experiences.

Undoubtedly the imaginative faculty was brought extensively into play, as well as the volitional, for I endeavoured to *translate myself*, spiritually, into her room, and to attract her attention, as it were, while standing there. My effort was sustained for perhaps eight minutes, after which I felt tired, and was soon asleep.

The next thing I was conscious of was meeting the lady next morning (*i. e.*, in a dream, I suppose?), and asking her at

[1] *Studies in Psychical Research*, by F. Podmore, pp. 249–252.

once if she had seen me last night. The reply came, "Yes." "How?" I inquired. Then in words strangely clear and low, like a well audible whisper, came the answer, "I was sitting beside you." These words, so clear, awoke me instantly, and I felt I must have been dreaming; but on reflection I remembered what I had been "willing" before I fell asleep, and it struck me, "This must be a *reflex* action from the percipient." My watch showed 3.40 A.M. The following is what I wrote immediately in pencil, standing in my night dress: "As I reflected upon those clear words, they struck me as being quite *intuitive*, I mean *subjective*, and to have proceeded *from within*, *as my own conviction*, rather than a communication from any one else. And yet I can't remember her face at all, as one can after a vivid dream."

But the words were uttered in a clear, quick tone, which was most remarkable, and awoke me at once.

My friend, in the note with which she sent me the enclosed account of *her own* experience, says: "I remember the man put all the lamps out soon after I came upstairs, and that is only done about a quarter to four."

Mr. Godfrey received from the percipient on the 16th November an account of her side of the experience, and at his request she wrote as follows:

Yesterday — viz., the morning of November 16th, 1886— about half-past three o'clock, I woke up with a start and an idea that some one had come into the room. I heard a curious sound, but fancied it might be the birds in the ivy outside. Next I experienced a strange restless longing to leave the room and go downstairs. This feeling became so overpowering that at last I rose and lit a candle, and went down, thinking if I could get some soda-water it might have a quieting effect. On returning to my room I saw Mr. Godfrey standing under the large window on the staircase. He was dressed in his usual style, and with an expression on his face that I have noticed when he has been looking very earnestly

at anything. He stood there, and I held up the candle and gazed at him for three or four seconds in utter amazement, and then, as I passed up the staircase, he disappeared. The impression left on my mind was so vivid that I fully intended waking a friend who occupied the same room as myself, but remembering that I should only be laughed at as romantic and imaginative, refrained from doing so.

I was not frightened at the appearance of Mr. Godfrey, but felt much excited, and could not sleep afterwards.

On the 21st of the same month I heard a full account of the incident given above from Mr. Godfrey, and on the day following from Mrs. ——. Mrs. —— told me that the figure appeared quite distinct and lifelike at first, though she could not remember to have noticed more than the upper part of the body. As she looked, it grew more and more shadowy, and finally faded away. Mrs. ——, it should be added, had previously seen two phantasmal figures representing a parent whom she had recently lost. [1]

Mr. Godfrey at our request made two other trials, without, of course, letting Mrs. —— know his intention. The first of these attempts was without result, owing perhaps to the date chosen, as he was aware at the time, being unsuitable. But in a trial made on the 7th December, 1886, complete success was again attained. Mrs. —— has had no visual hallucinations except on the occasions mentioned.

It will be noticed that the dress of the apparition

[1] These details are taken from notes made by me immediately after the interview.

represented that in which the percipient was accustomed to see Mr. Godfrey, not the dress which he was actually wearing at the time. If the image in these cases is in fact nothing but the outward expression of the percipient's thought, this result is of course what we should naturally expect to find.

The next case is remarkable because three persons in the house appear to have been affected by the agent's experiment. Mr. F. W. Rose had, he tells us, mesmerised Mrs. E., the percipient, on several occasions. Some time in 1891 or 1892 he endeavoured "to send his astral body" to Mrs. E. On the first attempt Mrs. E. spent a restless night and the maid was disturbed by hearing a bell ringing. Mr. Rose mentioned his attempt two or three days afterwards. On the second occasion—Mr. Rose had, of course, not intimated beforehand his intention of experimenting—Mrs. E. and her daughter Mrs. A. were both disturbed.

No. 29

Mrs. A., the daughter, writes[1]:

Feb. 5th, 1896.

I cannot remember the date; but one night two or three years ago, I came back from the theatre to my mother's flat at 6, S.-street; and after I had been into her bedroom and told her all about it, I went to bed about 1 A. M. I had not been asleep long when I started up frightened, fancying that I had heard some one walk down the passage towards my mother's room; but hearing nothing more went again to sleep. I started up alarmed in the same way three or four times before dawn.

[1] *Journal*, S. P. R., May, 1896.

In the morning, upon inquiry, my mother (who was ill at the time) only told me she had had a very disturbed night.

Then I asked my brother, who told me that he had suffered in the same way as I had, starting up several times in a frightened manner. On hearing this, my mother then told me that she had seen an apparition of Mr. Rose.

Later in the day Mr. Rose came in, and my mother asked him casually if he had been doing anything last night; upon which he told us that he had gone to bed willing that he should visit and appear to us. We made him promise not to repeat the experiment.

A night or so just before, I remember the servant came into my mother's bedroom, alarmed, at 3 A.M.; she said she had heard the electric bell ring. The bell at that time of night is inaccessible to the casual passer-by, as the outer door is then closed. The servant, I believe, heard it more than once; she cried and fancied it was an omen of *her* mother's death.

Mrs. E., in narrating the incident of the electric bell, adds that she and Mrs. A. had both passed a restless and uncomfortable night on that occasion; and that on the Sunday following Mr. Rose happened to mention that he had tried on that day to "send his spook." Mrs. E. then continues:

Feb. 12th, 1896.

. . . Some weeks passed,[1] when I was struck down with a bad attack of influenza, and again my daughter came to nurse me.

I had quite recovered, but had not yet been out of my room, but was to go into the drawing-room next day. On this particular night, my daughter had gone to the theatre and my son remained with me. He had bid me good-night about half-past

[1] Mrs. A., who has just read this, seems to think *now* that the two occurrences were separated by some weeks, not days as she wrote in her statement (Note by collector).

ten and gone to his room, and I lay reading, when suddenly a strange creepy sensation came over me, and I felt my eyes drawn towards the left hand side of the room. I felt I must look, and there distinct against the curtain was a blue luminous mist.

I could not for some time move my eyes away, and all the time I was really terrified, for I thought it was something uncanny. I wished to call my son, but fought down the feeling, knowing I should only upset him if he thought I was nervous, and possibly they would think I was going to be ill again. So I battled down my fears, and making up my mind it was all imagination, turned round with my back to this misty light and continued my book. Soon the feeling of fear passed away; but all desire for sleep had also gone, and for a long time I lay reading,—when again quite suddenly came the dread and the feeling of awe.

This time I was impelled to cast my eyes downward to the side of my bed, and there, creeping upwards towards me, was the same blue luminous mist. I was too terrified to move, and remember keeping my book straight up before my face as though to ward off a blow, at the same time exerting all my strength of will and determination not to be afraid,—when suddenly, as if with a jerk, above the top of my book came the brow and eyes of Mr. Rose. In an instant all fear left me. I dropped my book with an exclamation not complimentary, for then I knew that Mr. Rose had been trying the same thing again. In one moment mist and face were gone.

It is unfortunate that in this case no notes were made by either party, and that the date of the experience cannot now be fixed. But Mr. Rose has given us a concordant account, so that the coincidence is confirmed by the testimony of three witnesses.

In the case next to be quoted, we have accounts from both agent and percipient written before the

result was known. The case, moreover, presents other features of interest. Miss Danvers and Mrs. Fleetwood (both names are fictitious) are ladies who were well known to the late Frederic Myers. He asked Miss Danvers to endeavour to appear to Mrs. Fleetwood without communicating her intention to that lady. On June 20, 1894, he received the following letter, dated 19th June, with two enclosures:

No. 30. From Miss Danvers[1]

"On Sunday night at 12 P.M., I tried to appear to Mrs. Fleetwood [at a distance of about nine miles] and succeeded in feeling as if I were really in her room. I had *previously* written my statement, which I enclose, together with Mrs. Fleetwood's, which she has just sent me. She wrote it also *at the time*, not knowing I was trying to appear. I was lying down, not kneeling, but the other details are correct."

A memorandum, signed by Miss Danvers, was enclosed, as follows: "June 17, 1894, 12 P.M. I write this just before trying to appear to Mrs. Fleetwood. My hair is down and I am going to lie down and try to appear with my eyes closed."

Also a memorandum, signed by Mrs. Fleetwood, as follows: "Sunday night, June 17, 1894.—I woke from my first sleep to see Edith Danvers apparently kneeling on an easy chair by my bedside, her profile turned towards me, her hair flowing, and eyes closed, or looking quite down. I felt startled at first, as I always do, on seeing visions in waking moments, but determined to keep quiet; and after I was fully awake and able to reason with myself, the figure still remained, and then gradually faded like a dissolving view. I got up and looked at the clock. It was just twelve. I was alone in the room. As I now write, it is about two minutes after twelve."

In conversation on June 23rd [Mr. Myers writes] Miss Dan-

[1] *Proceedings*, S. P. R., vol. x., p. 418.

vers told me that she had seen, in a sort of flash, Mrs. Fleetwood start up in bed, rest on her elbow, and look towards her. She had not been clearly aware of her own attitude in Mrs. Fleetwood's room, although she seemed aware of her *position*, which corresponded to the place towards which Mrs. Fleetwood gazed. Miss Danvers had never previously made notes of an experiment, and had not seen the importance of writing down this point at once, nor had she felt confident that Mrs. Fleetwood really saw her. Mrs. Fleetwood also sent me a letter of Miss Danvers to herself, dated June 18th, in which, among various other matters, Miss Danvers asks, "Have I appeared to you at all? I tried last night, but you may not have been alone." There is, of course, therefore, no proof that Miss Danvers's sense of invasion of the room was more than subjective.

In a later experiment Miss Danvers claims to have seen in Mrs. Fleetwood's room the third volume of *Marcella*, which she regards as a proof that she, on her side, acquired supernormal knowledge of Mrs. Fleetwood's surroundings. Mr. Godfrey also, it will be remembered, believed that he had received a reflex impression from the percipient. It is possible that in every case of telepathic action the influence is reciprocal. If it were so, the fact would in many cases necessarily escape observation; since in some of the most striking instances the agent was on his deathbed, or was passing through some other crisis, in the stress of which the comparatively feeble telepathic message would be likely to pass unregarded. There are, at any rate, very few well attested cases in which there is evidence, beyond the narrator's own belief to that effect, for a reciprocal affection. We have two cases, however,

in which the narrator had an unusually vivid dream of being at home; in the first case unexplained footsteps were simultaneously heard in the house by five persons and recognised as resembling those of the dreamer. In the second case, the figure of the dreamer was actually seen and heard in the house.[1] In a third case the narrator awoke under the impression that she was a child again in the old home and called on her sister, "Jessie, Jessie." The cry awoke her husband who testifies to the fact. That same night her sister—300 or 400 miles away—was awakened by hearing her name twice called in the sister's voice.[2] In another case the husband, absent from home on a journey, willed himself to his wife's bedside and seemed to himself to be standing there. His figure was actually seen at the time by his wife at her bedside.[3]

In none of these cases, as said, is there clear evidence of reciprocity; but they certainly indicate that one of the conditions of telepathic affection at a distance may be a clear realisation on the agent's part of the percipient's surroundings. In the following case a reciprocal hallucination was produced, but there was no recognition of the fact at the time by either percipient; nor was there any emotional disturbance or exceptional crisis to account for the coincidence. The occurrence was investigated by Mr. A. W. Orr of Didsbury, who enclosed the two following accounts on July 26, 1905.

[1] *Journal*, S. P. R., December, 1898.
[2] *Ibid.*, June, 1895. [3] *Ibid.*

No. 31. From Mrs. Ellen Green[1]

I had been staying at the house of Mr. Ward, a retired Master in the Mercantile Marine, who resides at Northwood House, Llanishen, near Cardiff, and on Tuesday, June 20th [1905], he drove me over to Whitchurch (about two miles from Llanishen) where I was to spend a couple of days with friends, Mr. and Mrs. Berwick. He left me there at about eleven o'clock in the forenoon and returned to his home. On the following afternoon at about half-past three I was sitting alone in the drawing-room, Mrs. Berwick being in her own room, and, on happening to look up, I saw Mr. Ward standing at the bay window and looking in at me as though he desired to speak to me. He was in his usual dress, and is not a man to be easily mistaken for any one else. Thinking he had brought some letters for me, I rose hastily and went towards the window calling to him and waving my hand to him, partly in greeting and partly as a sign for him to go to the hall door, but when I reached the window I was surprised not to see him. I concluded, however, that he must have gone to the door without my noticing and so I hurried to the door to let him in. I was exceedingly surprised and alarmed when I opened the hall door to see nobody there, nor anywhere about the house. Later when Mrs. Berwick came down I told her—and also Mr. Berwick—of my experience, and like myself they felt extremely anxious lest some harm had happened to Mr. Ward, for whom we all felt a strong regard.

Mr. and Mrs. Berwick, with whom Mrs. Green was staying, append their signatures, as confirming the accuracy of the account.

Captain Ward's account of his side of the experience is as follows:

Northwood, Birchgrove, Cardiff,
2nd August, 1905.

I have pleasure in reply to your letter to give you here the

[1] *Journal*, S. P. R., February, 1906.

facts of the incident as it actually happened. On the 20th June last I drove Mrs. Green in my pony trap to Mr. Berwick's house in Whitchurch, Cardiff, and on returning home to above address, met with an accident, being thrown out of my trap backwards, hurting my neck and ankle. On the following day the 21st inst. I was unable to leave the house, and lay on the sofa in my dining-room, when between the hours of 3 and 4 P.M. I distinctly heard Mrs. Green's voice outside the front door calling me. I managed to rise from the couch and look out through the window to call her in, but found no person there; the time would exactly agree with that when Mrs. Green saw my form at Whitchurch.

This I found out on speaking to Mrs. Green on Thursday the 22d inst. I had not seen her between the 20th and 22nd. The above are the facts of the case.

FREDERICK WARD.

Mrs. Green, it should be added, is a trance speaker on Spiritualist platforms and a natural clairvoyant, who has had other remarkable experiences of the kind. The accounts, it will be seen, were written down within a few weeks of the occurrences described; and indeed the curiously inconclusive character of the coincidence affords in itself some indication that the narrative has not been unconsciously improved.

Other instances of possibly reciprocal affection will be found in *Phantasms of the Living*, vol. ii., chapter xiv.; and in *Apparitions and Thought Transference*, p. 299.

In publishing some cases of the type in 1886 Mr.

Gurney pointed out that the evidence then available was "so small that the genuineness of the type might fairly be called in question".[1] And the twenty-two years which have elapsed cannot be said to have added material confirmation.

[1] *Phantasms*, vol. ii., p. 167.

CHAPTER VI

TELEPATHIC HALLUCINATIONS

IN the following pages a few specimen cases will be cited to illustrate the questions dealt with in the last chapter. In the selection of these examples I have not, however, confined myself to the material brought together by the census, but have drawn also upon the records accumulated by the Society since 1894. In view, however, of the deterioration in the quality of the evidence effected by the lapse of time, as shown in the last chapter, I have endeavoured to select narratives where the record was comparatively recent; in one case only of those cited in the present chapter does the interval between record and event exceed ten years; in most of the examples the account, if not actually written before the event was known, is dated only a few days later.

In the first case we have to deal with an auditory hallucination. The coincidence in this case may appear very trivial. But it is to be noted that the percipient at the time connected her experience with the presumed agent. Further, it made sufficient impression upon her to lead her to mention it in a letter. The correspondence has fortunately

been preserved, and I have been permitted to see it and to verify the extracts quoted. The account which follows was written in 1889.

No. 32. From Miss C. Clark[1]

I heard some one sobbing, one evening last August (1888), about 10 P.M. It was in the house, in Dunbar, Scotland, as I was preparing to go to bed. Feeling convinced that it was my younger sister, I advised another sister not to go into the next room, whence the sounds seemed to proceed. After waiting with me for a few minutes, this sister went into the dining-room, and returned to me saying that our youngest sister was in the dining-room and not crying at all. Then I at once thought there must be something the matter with my greatest friend, a girl of twenty-four, then in Lincolnshire. I wrote next day asking her if at that hour on the previous night she had been crying. In her next letter she said yes; she was suffering great pain with toothache, just at the time, and was unable to restrain a few sobs. . . .

This has been the only similar experience I have had.

Cecily C. Clark.

The following are extracts from the contemporary correspondence.

Extracts from Letters

I. (From Miss Clark to Miss Maughan.)

Dunbar, Wednesday, August 22nd, 1888, 9 P.M.

Were you crying on Sunday night near 11 o'clock? because I *distinctly* heard some one crying, and supposed it was H—— in the next room, but she was n't there at all. Then I thought . . . that it might be you. . . .

Thursday, August 23rd, 1888, 4.45 P.M.

[Continuation of letter of August 22nd, not posted until 23rd.—F. P.]

[1] *Proceedings*, S. P. R., vol. x., p. 291.

Thank you very much for your letter just come. I am so sorry your face is sore; did it make you cry on Sunday night? . . .

II. (From Miss Maughan to Miss Clark, received by the latter on August 23, 1888.)

E. Kirkby Vicarage, Spilsby,
Tuesday evening, August 21st, 1888.

[Post-mark Spilsby, August 22nd, 1888.]

. . . On Sunday we went to see Wroxham Broad. . . . We had an immense amount of walking to do altogether, and I think I got a little cold in my face in the morning, and all night I suffered with it, and my face is swelled still. . . .

III. (From Miss Maughan to Miss Clark, received by the latter August 26, 1888.)

Thursday, August 23rd, 11 P.M.

I am putting bread poultices on my gums. I have never had such a huge swelling before, and it *won't* go down. It is so horribly uncomfortable. . . .

Saturday afternoon.—Thanks for letter. Yes, I was crying on Sunday night—only on account of the pain. It was awful, but I only cried quietly, as Edith was asleep. . . .

But visual hallucinations are at once more impressive and more valuable as evidence. I will begin with a case in which it is hard to know whether to class the percipient's impression as an illusion or a hallucination. The point is not of material importance since the impression, whatever its nature, was of an exceptional, if not actually unique character in the percipient's experience. The vision, it will be seen, preceded the death by rather more than twelve hours, but occurred during the period of the fatal seizure.

No. 33. From Prince Victor Duleep Singh[1]

Highclere Castle, Newbury, November 8, 1894.

On Saturday, October 21, 1893, I was in Berlin with Lord Carnarvon. We went to a theatre together and returned before midnight. I went to bed, leaving, as I always do, a bright light in the room (electric light). As I lay in bed I found myself looking at an oleograph which hung on the wall opposite my bed. I saw distinctly the face of my father, the Maharajah Duleep Singh, looking at me, as it were out of this picture ; not like a portrait of him, but his real head. I continued looking and still saw my father looking at me with an intent expression. Though not in the least alarmed, I was so puzzled that I got out of bed to see what the picture really was. It was an oleograph commonplace picture of a girl holding a rose and leaning out of a balcony, an arch forming a background. The girl's face was quite small, whereas my father's head was the size of life and filled the frame.

I was in no special anxiety about my father at the time, and had for some years known him to be seriously out of health ; but there had been no news to alarm me about him.

Next morning (Sunday) I told the incident to Lord Carnarvon.

That evening (Sunday) late, on returning home, Lord Carnarvon brought two telegrams into my room and handed them to me. I said at once, " My father is dead." That was the fact. He had had an apoplectic seizure on the Saturday evening at about nine o'clock, from which he never recovered, but continued unconscious and died on the Sunday, early in the afternoon. My father had often said to me that if I was not with him when he died he would try and come to me.

I am not subject to hallucinations, and have only once had any similar experience, when, as a schoolboy, I fancied I saw the figure of a dead schoolboy who had died in the room which I slept in with my brother ; but I attached no importance to this.

Victor Duleep Singh.

[1] *Journal*, S. P. R., December, 1894.

Lord Carnarvon writes:

I can confirm Prince V. Duleep Singh's account. I heard the incident from him on the Sunday morning. The same evening, at about 12 P.M., he received a telegram notifying him of his father's sudden illness and death. We had no knowledge of his father's illness. He has never told me of any similar previous occurrence.

CARNARVON.

The Maharajah Duleep Singh died on Sunday, October 22, 1893.

We have several cases in which the sight of a material object appears to have facilitated the hallucination. Thus Edmund Gurney has quoted, in *Phantasms of the Living*, a case where a young girl saw a familiar face growing out of a pansy.[1] In another case the percipient saw the figure of her mother in a white dimity curtain at the foot of the bed. When the curtain was shaken the figure disappeared.[2] In Case 41 below, the percipient saw a face form on the panels of a wardrobe illuminated by the moon.

In the next case the vision seems to have been seen within an hour of the death. Here again the hallucination appears not to have been completely externalised.

No. 34. From MADAME BROUSSILOFF[3]

S. PETERSBURG, April 19th, 1895.

On the 16th (28th) of February of this year (1895) between 9 and 10 o'clock in the evening, I, the undersigned, was sitting in our drawing-room—the small one—facing the large

[1] Vol. ii., p. 28.
[2] *Journal*, S. P. R., June, 1896.
[3] *Ibid.*, July, 1895

drawing-room which I could see in its entire length. My husband, his brother with his wife, and my mother were also sitting in the same room with me round a large round table. I was writing down my household accounts for the day, whilst the others were carrying on some gay conversation. Having accidentally raised my head and looked into the large drawing-room, I noticed, with astonishment, that a large grey shadow had passed from the door of the dining-room to that of the ante-chamber ; and it came into my head that the figure I had seen bore a striking resemblance in stature to Colonel Av[1]-Meinander, an acquaintance of ours, who had lived in this very lodging for a long time. At the first moment I wished to say at once that a ghost had just flashed before me, but stopped, as I was afraid of being laughed at by my husband's brother and his wife, and also of being scolded by my husband, who, in view of the excitement which I showed when such phenomena were taking place, tried to convince me that they were the fruit of my fancy. As I knew that Meinander was alive and well, and was commander of the "Malorossüsky" 40th regiment of dragoons, I did not say anything then; but when I was going to bed, I related to my mother what I had seen, and the next morning could not refrain from mentioning it to my husband.

Our astonishment was extreme when on the 18th of February (2nd of March) we learned that Nicholas Ottovitch Av-Meinander had actually died after a short illness on the 16th (28th) of February at 9 o'clock in the evening, in the town of Stashovo,[2] where his regiment is stationed.

Anna Nicolaievna Broussiloff.

Madame Broussiloff's mother, Madame Hagemeister, and Colonel Broussiloff write independently to say that they remember hearing of Madame Broussiloff's experience before the news of the

[1] Particle equivalent to the German "von" (the name is a Swedish one).

[2] Government of Radom, Poland, 1200 *versts* from Petersburg.

death came. Colonel Broussiloff adds that from the obituary notice in the *Novoie Vremia*, No. 6816, it appears that Colonel Meinander died at 9 P.M. on February 16th (28th).

The narrative in this case presents a rather unusual feature. The percipient was in company with several other persons, but her experience was unshared. In the great majority of cases the seer of the hallucination was alone, a peculiarity which is no doubt due to the dreamlike nature of the experience: when more than one person is present it is frequently the case that the hallucination is shared by all. The problem involved in this "collective" percipience will be discussed later.

In the next case the percipient's vision occurred about two hours after the death of the child. It seems possible that in this case the telephone clerk acted as agent.[1]

No. 35. From Mrs. Michell [2]

The Hollies, St. Helens, Lancaster, May 8th, 1894.

On the 25th of last month I was sitting in the nursery, and my little daughter Gwendoline was playing with her dolls, and she suddenly laughed so as to attract my attention, and I asked her what she was laughing at. She said, "O mother, I thought I saw little Jack in that chair"—a vacant chair in the room—and indicating her little cousin. About five minutes after this the clerk telephoned from the office saying he had just received a telegram from Penzance announcing the death of little Jack. It was about half-past nine in the morning

[1] See, in this connection, Cases 39 and 40 in the present chapter, and cases 42 and others in Chapter X.

[2] *Journal*, S. P. R., January, 1895.

when the incident occurred in the nursery at St. Helens. The death in Penzance took place at about half-past seven on the same morning. E. MICHELL.

In reply to our further inquiries, Mr. Michell wrote :

May 28th, 1894.

Gwendoline is five years and four months old.

I am not aware that she has had any previous experience of the kind related to Mr. Macdonald, but that the one in question is a fact I have not the slightest doubt.

She knows the clerk at our office, and he has often conversed with her, and occasionally played with her in an ordinary way.

The impression she had was just prior to the clerk's telephoning my wife, and although the clerk did not think about my daughter missing Jack at all, yet Mrs. Michell herself was anxiously wondering what the news respecting Jack would be.

There was no one else in the nursery besides my wife and daughter, but Mrs. Michell was very deeply impressed with the matter, and then to receive the message very shortly after forced the matter upon her mind still deeper, and she told me immediately I arrived home. JAS. J. MICHELL.

"Little Jack," it should be added, died from convulsions in teething.

The percipient's impression in the next case passed through three separate stages. It began with a vivid sense of an actual presence; it then assumed the form of a transparent hallucination apparently like that seen by Madame Broussiloff; in its final stage the experience, though of a very unusual type, must be classed as a pseudo-hallucination, inasmuch as it did not actually enter the percipient's field of physical vision.

No. 36. From Mr. Percy Kearne

37 Avonmore Gardens, West Kensington,
24th December, 1894.

On the evening of February 10, 1894, I was sitting in my room expecting the return of two friends from a concert in the provinces where they had been performing. The friends in question had lived with me for some years, and we were more than usually attached to one another. I had no knowledge by what particular train they intended returning to town, but knew when the last train they could catch was due to arrive in London (9.5 P.M.) and how long to a few minutes they would take from the terminus to get home (about 10 P.M.). Our profession entails a great deal of travelling; my friends have had plenty of experience in this direction, and there was no question of their being well able to look after themselves. I may just add that one of these friends has made the same journey weekly for the last eight or nine years, so that I knew quite well his usual time of arrival at Liverpool Street.

On the day mentioned they were performing at an afternoon concert, and I had every reason to believe they would be tired and get home as soon as possible. I allowed half-an-hour beyond the usual time (10.30 P.M.) of arrival to elapse before I got at all uneasy, speculating as people will under such circumstances as to what was keeping them, although arguing to myself all the time that there was not the slightest occasion for alarm. I then took up a book in which I was much interested, sitting in an easy chair before the fire with a reading lamp close to my right side, and in such a position that only by deliberately turning round could I see the window on my left, before which heavy chenille curtains were drawn. I had read some twenty minutes or so, was thoroughly absorbed in the book, my mind was perfectly quiet, and for the time being my friends were quite forgotten, when suddenly without a moment's warning my whole being seemed roused to the highest state of tension or aliveness, and I was aware, with an

[1] *Journal*, S. P. R., February, 1895.

intenseness not easily imagined by those who have never experienced it, that another being or presence was not only in the room but close to me. I put my book down, and although my excitement was great, I felt quite collected and not conscious of any sense of fear. Without changing my position, and looking straight at the fire, I knew somehow that my friend A. H. was standing at my left elbow, but so far behind me as to be hidden by the arm-chair in which I was leaning back. Moving my eyes round slightly without otherwise changing my position, the lower portion of one leg became visible, and I instantly recognised the grey-blue material of trousers he often wore, but the stuff appeared semi-transparent, reminding me of tobacco smoke in consistency. I could have touched it with my hand without moving more than my left arm. With that curious instinctive wish not to see more of such a "figure," I did no more than glance once or twice at the apparition, and then directed my gaze steadily at the fire in front of me. An appreciable space of time passed—probably several seconds in all, but seeming in reality much longer—when the most curious thing happened. Standing upright between me and the window on my left, and at a distance of about four feet from me and almost immediately behind my chair, I saw perfectly distinctly the figure of my friend—the face very pale, the head slightly thrown back, the eyes shut, and on one side of the throat, just under the jaw, a wound with blood on it. The figure remained motionless with the arms close to the sides, and for some time, how long I can't say, I looked steadily at it; then all at once roused myself, turned deliberately round, the figure vanished, and I realised instantly that I had seen the figure behind me without moving from my first position—an impossible feat physically. I am perfectly certain I never moved my position from the first appearance of the figure as seen physically until it disappeared on my turning.

Mr. Kearne then made a note of the time, and within an hour his friends returned.

My friend B. then came up, saying, "Come and see A. H., what a state he is in." I found him in the bathroom with his collar and shirt torn open, the front of the latter with blood upon it, and bathing a wound under his jaw which was bleeding. His face was very pale, and he was evidently suffering from a shock of some kind. As soon as I could I got an account of what had happened.

They had arrived in London punctually, and feeling tired, although in good spirits, drove with a third gentleman, who had been performing with them, to a restaurant opposite King's Cross Station to have some supper. Before leaving the restaurant, my friend, A. H. (whose apparition I saw), complained of feeling faint from the heat of the place, went out into the street to get some fresh air, and had hardly got into the open when he felt his senses leave him, and he fell heavily forward, striking his jaw on the edge of the kerb, then rolling over on his back. On recovering consciousness, two policemen were standing over him, one of whom—failing to unfasten his collar to give him air—had cut both that and his tie. After informing the rest of the party of what had happened, a cab was called, and my two friends were driven home as quickly as possible. The exact time that my friend A. H. fainted was not of course noted by them; but judging by the average time a cab takes to do the distance, cut rather short on this occasion in the effort to get A. H. home quickly, it would correspond within three minutes to the time when the apparition appeared to me.

The two friends referred to, Mr. Alfred Hobday and Mr. Arthur Bent, append their signatures to the narrative, in corroboration of its accuracy so far as they are concerned.

In the following case the phantasm was sufficiently distinct and lifelike for the colour of the dress to be noted. The experience, it will be seen,

was impressive enough to induce the percipient to make a note of the circumstance in her diary.

No. 37. From Miss Hervey

9 Tavistock Crescent, W.,[1] April 28, 1892.

I saw the figure of my cousin (a nurse in Dublin) coming upstairs, dressed in grey. I was in Tasmania, and the time that I saw her was between 6 and 7 P.M. on April 21st, 1888.

I had just come in from a ride and was in the best of health and spirits. I was between 31 and 32 years of age.

I had lived with my cousin, and we were the greatest of friends, but my going to Tasmania in 1887 had, of course, separated us. She was a nurse, and at the time I saw her in April, 1888, she was dying of typhus fever, a fact unknown to me till 6 weeks after her death. Her illness lasted only 5 days, and I heard of her death at the same time as of her illness.

There was no one present with me at the time, but I narrated what I had seen to the friend with whom I was living, and asked why my cousin, Ethel B., should have been dressed in grey. My friend said that was the dress of the nurses in that particular hospital; a fact unknown to me.

The impression of seeing my cousin was so vivid that I wrote a long letter to her that night, saying I had had this vision. The letter, arriving after she was dead, was returned to me and I destroyed it."

Rose B. E. I. Hervey.

I called on Miss Hervey on July 21, 1892. She explained that she was staying at the time of her experience with Lady H. Miss Hervey and Lady H. had just returned from a drive, and Miss Hervey was leaving her room to cross the upper landing to Lady H.'s room to have tea. On passing the stairs

[1] *Proceedings*, S. P. R., vol. x., pp. 282–283. The account was written in answer to the census questions.

she saw the figure coming up. She recognised it at once and ran away to Lady H., without waiting to see the figure disappear, and told her what she had seen. Lady H. laughed at her, but told her to note it in her diary. This Miss Hervey did. I saw the entry: "Saturday, April 21st, 1888, 6 P.M. Vision of [nickname given] on landing in grey dress." The news of death did not arrive till June. Date of death, April 22, 1888, at 4.30 P.M.

Lady H. writes:

July 30th, 1893.

DEAR SIR,—Your letter dated April 6th has followed me back to England, and I should have answered it a week or two sooner, but I thought my son from Tasmania might be able to throw some light on your search for a definite corroboration of Miss Hervey's account of an apparition which she tells you she saw when in Tasmania with us in 1888. He, however, can do little more than I can for its confirmation. He recollects that Miss Hervey made such a statement at the time, and I seem to remember something about it, but nothing really definite.

The dress of the nurses at the hospital in question is a check pattern of white and blue with a little red. It has a greyish tone at a distance, but the colour coincidence is not sufficiently striking to carry much weight. The difference of time between Tasmania and Dublin is about ten hours, so that the vision preceded the death by about thirty-two hours.

The great bulk of the cases in our collection are of the same type as the five narratives last quoted: the figure seen is more or less realistic; it is recognised by the person to whom it appears; and the

percipient is a relative or intimate friend. We now pass to cases which in one respect or another differ from this clearly defined type.

The following case presents a grotesque feature which is almost without parallel in our records. In this case also the percipient, it will be observed, was in the company of others. The case was forwarded to us on May 5, 1892, by Mr. Raper of Trinity College, Oxford, who writes that he heard an account of the incident very soon after its occurrence.

No. 38 From M. J. Dove[1]

New College, Oxford.

Just before last Christmas I went over to Liverpool with one of my brothers and my sister. It was a very fine, clear day, and there was a great crowd of people shopping in the streets. We were walking down Lord-street, one of the principal streets, when, passing me, I saw an old uncle of mine whom I knew very little, and had not seen for a very long time, although he lived near me. I saw three distinct shapes hobbling past (he was lame) one after the other in a line. It did n't seem to strike me at the moment as being in the least curious, not even there being three shapes in a line. I said to my sister, "I have just seen Uncle E., and I am sure he is dead." I said this as it were mechanically, and not feeling at all impressed. Of course my brother and sister laughed. We thought nothing more about it while in Liverpool. The first thing my mother said to us on getting home was, "I have some news"; and then she told us that this uncle had died very early that morning. I don't know the particular hour. I saw the three shapes at about 12 in the morning. I felt perfectly fit and well, and was not thinking of my uncle in the

[1] *Journal*, S. P. R., January, 1895.

least, nor did I know he was ill. Both my brother and my sister heard me say that I had seen him and believed he was dead, and they were equally astonished at hearing of his death on our return home. My uncle and I knew each other very little. In fact, he hardly knew me by sight, although he knew me well when I was a small child.

Miss Dove wrote to her brother on the 17th May, 1892:

I do remember distinctly your saying to me in Liverpool, "three men have passed me exactly like Uncle E., he must be dead," and that we heard afterwards he had died that day, but I do not remember the date.

The uncle, it appears, was found dead in his bed on that morning, having died in the course of the night.

The grotesque character of the central incident in this narrative illustrates unmistakably the fundamental character of hallucinations. The mere fact that the curious vision did not strike the narrator at the time as odd, and did not make any emotional impression, is in itself a proof that he was not fully master of his faculties. A like partial dissociation of consciousness may no doubt be presumed to have existed in the case of Prince Duleep Singh's vision (No. 33) and in the case of Mr. Percy Kearne (No. 36). In order to appreciate their significance it is important to bear in mind that these apparitions are after all of the nature of dreams; and that the critical faculties of the percipient may in some cases be altogether in abeyance at the moment, however wide awake he may

be immediately before and after the experience. In the case of post-hypnotic hallucinations or enjoined actions we are often able experimentally to determine the momentary recurrence of a state of dream consciousness.[1] A painstaking critic of our evidence, Herr Edmund Parish, affirms the absolute identity of the two classes of impressions: "there is absolutely no distinction, either theoretical or practical, to be drawn between the sense deceptions of the dream state and those of waking consciousness." But the statement is made for controversial purposes, and requires considerable modification. We need not now concern ourselves about theoretic distinctions between the two classes of phenomena. But for practical purposes, especially for the purpose of the present enquiry, there are two very important distinctions between waking hallucinations and the hallucinations of sleep which we call dreams. In the first place, the waking vision is of much rarer occurrence, and much more impressive, as the common experience of mankind, apart from the census, is sufficient to show. In the second place, the waking experience is likely to be more accurately remembered, not only, or even mainly, because of its rarity and impressiveness, but because it has a fixed place in time and generally in space also. Whatever the actual state of the percipient's consciousness at the moment, the vision

[1] In some of these experimental cases the subject is found completely to forget his own vision or action immediately afterwards. It would seem therefore that the state of dissociation in the case of spontaneous hallucinations is not as a rule very far-reaching.

at any rate forms a link in the chain of waking experiences.[1]

In some cases the impression made upon the percipient, though fairly distinct, is not referred to any particular person, until its coincidence with a death gives it retrospective significance. Thus a doctor tells us that about 7.30 on a December morning "when just on the point of rising, I became conscious that a dark form, distinctly that of a female of medium height, was passing round the foot of the bed, and glided up to my side. When it reached me I raised myself in bed and felt with my hand, but it passed through the shadow." Later it appeared that the vision occurred within half an hour of the death of a patient; and the percipient only then realised the likeness of the phantasmal figure to that of the deceased person. Of course a case of this kind has little evidential importance, even though the hallucination was unique in the percipient's experience. But we have other cases of this type.[2]

[1] See Parish, *Hallucinations and Illusions*, pp. 291, *et seqq.* Parish is a critic who has every intention of being impartial. In discussing telepathy he has summed up the Lehmann-Sidgwick controversy in favour of the Society for Psychical Research, or rather against the Danish experimenters (*op. cit.*, p. 320). But in the whole passage referred to he seems to have been misled by a *parti pris*. Apart from the fact that we have some definite evidence, in the census tables, of the comparative rarity of waking hallucinations, and of the rate at which they tend to be forgotten, Parish himself recognises and insists upon the fact that the dissociation of consciousness, which is the chief cause of forgetfulness, is, in the case of what are commonly called waking hallucinations, less profound than in ordinary sleep. For a fuller criticism of the argument against telepathy in Parish's book, see Miss Johnson's review (*Proceedings*, S. P. R., vol. xi., p. 163).

[2] *Proceedings*, vol. x., p. 265. See especially the narrative of the

Hitherto it has been assumed that the "agent" in these spontaneous cases is the dying man, or, generally speaking, the principal actor in the crisis which gives rise to the percipient's experience. But though this assumption is perhaps usually correct, it is by no means a necessary corollary of the hypothesis of thought transference. And in many cases we have clear indications that the telepathic impulse may have originated in the minds of some of those cognisant of the death at the time.

In the following narrative, for instance, the vision represented the widow of the deceased, and appears to have coincided not with the death, which had taken place about one and one half hours previously, but with the subsequent conversation in which the thoughts of the survivors turned towards the percipient. The account is written in the form of a letter to Mrs. Sidgwick, by a lady well known to her, who prefers to remain anonymous. The percipient was in London at the time of the vision. J. W. was an old man who had been a ploughman, and afterwards kept the general shop and post-office in the remote country village where his death took place.

No. 39. From Miss R.[1]

March 7th, 1905.

On the night of Saturday, March 4th, or rather, early morning of March 5th [1905], I awoke and sat up to reach for

Countess Eugénie Kapnist, given in my *Apparitions and Thought Transference*, p. 252.

[1] *Journal*, S. P. R., November, 1906.

something on the table beside my bed. The room was not dark, as the curtains were drawn back, and the blinds were up, and there are some strong lights in the street outside. As I sat up all seemed dark except that I saw a face for a second, and the *same* face a little farther to the right and a little lower down, also for a second. I am not sure whether I saw the two faces (which were exactly the same) at the same moment or one just after the other, but I think the sight of them overlapped. The faces were of Mrs. J. W., who lives at the village at home. I only saw her head, all else being swallowed in darkness. I noticed her black cap, without any white, which she always wears. Her face was not strongly illuminated, and wore her usual expression. There was no appearance of life or action about it.

I was sufficiently struck by this to say to myself that I would write to you next morning about it, so that if there was any coincidence about it you would have evidence beforehand. I also turned over to the other side of my bed, took up the watch standing there and noticed the time by it was 4.19 A.M. As this watch was 5 minutes fast by "Big Ben," the real time must have been just 4.14 A.M. Unluckily when I woke next morning the whole thing went clean out of my recollection, and I never thought of it again till this morning (March 7th), when I received a letter from Mrs. N. [wife of the clergyman at Miss R.'s country home], dated March 6th, who among other things wrote as follows :

"Poor old J. W. at the village died yesterday morning early. He has been ill for a long time."

Miss R. adds that in the absence of a written memorandum she could not determine with certainty whether the date of her vision was on the morning of the 5th or 6th ; but from independent evidence she is "pretty confident" that it was the 5th. It appears from Mrs. N.'s further letters that J. W. died at about 2.50 A.M. on the 5th, and that

between 4 and 5 A.M. on that date Mrs. J. W. and her daughter-in-law were talking much of Miss R. and of her great kindness to them: Mrs. J. W. adding that she would like to offer Miss R. her corner cupboard.

In this case the "agency" of Mrs. J. W. would seem to be indicated by all the circumstances of the case. We have other instances in which a similar explanation is suggested. Thus Mrs. McAlpine saw a vision of her baby-nephew, six months old, at the time of his death. In this case it seems more natural to assume that the agent was some person tending the child, rather than the child itself.[1] In another case a woman dreamt of the death of a child and the arrangements for the funeral; the dream occurring more than twenty-four hours after the death.[2]

The following case of the apparition of a dog at about the time of death may, it is suggested, be similarly explained.

No. 40. From Mrs. Bagot[3]

The Palace, Hampton Court, February, 1896.

I was at Mentone in the spring of 1883, having left at home with the gardener a very favourite black and tan terrier, "Judy." I was sitting at table d'hôte with my daughter and husband and suddenly saw Judy run across the room, and exclaimed, "Why, there 's Judy!" There was no dog in the room or hotel, but I distinctly saw her, and when I went

[1] *Proceedings*, S. P. R., vol. x., p. 281. See also the curious case related by Miss Hawkins-Dempster, *Ibid.*, p. 261.

[2] See below, Case 42, Chapter X.

[3] *Journal*, S. P. R., April, 1896.

upstairs after table d'hôte, told my other daughter, Mrs. Wodehouse, what I had seen.

The next letter from home told me that Judy had gone out in the morning well, had apparently picked up some poison, as she was taken ill and died in half an hour; but I cannot say whether it was on the same day that I had seen her.

She was almost a human dog, so wonderfully intelligent and understanding, and devoted to me.

J. W. Bagot.

Mrs. Bagot's daughter, Mrs. Wodehouse, sent to us a copy of the entries in her diary under the dates March 24 and 28, 1883.

56 Chester Square, S.W.

(*Copy of Diary.*) March 24th, 1883. Easter Eve (Mentone). —"Drove with A. and picked anemones. Lovely bright day. But my head ached too much to enjoy it. Went to bed after tea and read Hettner's *Renaissance*. Mamma saw Judy's ghost at table d' hôte!"

March 28th, Wednesday (Monte Carlo).—"Mamma and A. came over for the day. Judy dead, poor old dear."

It will be seen that no exact correspondence is made out between the vision and the death; but it is clear that the apparition was seen before the news of the death was received. In this case it is not difficult to suppose that the agent may have been the person in whose charge the dog had been left. But to return for a moment to Case 39. It will be seen that Miss R. not only made no note of her experience but actually forgot all about it until she received the news of the death of J. W. As the vision had not been mentioned to any one we have no proof, beyond the percipient's word, for the

actual occurrence of the experience. That guarantee is no doubt in nearly all cases sufficient, so far as the narrator's good faith is concerned. In this particular case the details are related with such obvious care that there can, it is thought, be little doubt of their substantial accuracy. But Professor Royce of Harvard has suggested that in cases of this kind, when the impression is not noted down or mentioned beforehand, there may occur, on the receipt of the news of death or disaster, an instantaneous and irresistible hallucination of memory, which may give rise to a belief in a previous dream or other warning presaging the facts. For this assumed hallucination of memory he suggests the name "pseudo-presentiment." Professor Royce can bring forward little support for his hypothesis of an instantaneous hallucination; but an *illusion* of memory, magnifying and rearranging the details of a recent dream, seems in some cases not improbable. In any case, however, we should not place much reliance upon an experience not communicated to others or even remembered until after the event which gave it significance.[1]

As already indicated, we have many cases in which two or three persons in company have a similar and simultaneous hallucinatory experience. For the sake of simplicity I have deferred giving instances of collective percipience of this kind until a later chapter. The case where percipients not in the same room have simultaneous impressions is

[1] See Professor Royce's letter in *Mind* for April, 1888.

much rarer. The following instance of this type may be quoted. The case, it will be seen, exceeds the limit of ten years for the interval between event and record which we had set before ourselves as a standard, but the narrative bears on the face of it the impress of accuracy.

No. 41. From the Rev. Charles L. Tweedale, F. R. A. S.[1]

Weston Vicarage, nr. Otley, Yorkshire,
July 24th, 1906.

On the night of January 10th, 1879, I had retired early to rest. I awoke out of my first sleep to find the moon shining into my room. As I awoke my eyes were directed towards the panels of a cupboard, or wardrobe, built into the east wall of my room, and situated in the north-east corner. I watched the moonlight on the panels. As I gazed I suddenly saw a face form on the panels of the cupboard or wardrobe. Indistinct at first, it gradually became clearer until it was perfectly distinct as in life, when I saw the face of my grandmother. What particularly struck me at the moment and burnt itself into my recollection was the fact that the face wore an old-fashioned frilled or goffered cap. I gazed at it for a few seconds, during which it was as plain as the living face, when it faded gradually into the moonlight and was gone. I was not alarmed, but, thinking that I had been deceived by the moonlight and that it was an illusion, I turned over and went off to sleep again. In the morning when at breakfast I began telling the experience of the night to my parents. I had got well into my story, when, to my surprise, my father suddenly sprang up from his seat at the table and leaving his food almost untouched hurriedly left the room. As he walked towards the door I gazed after him in amazement, saying to mother, "Whatever is the matter with father?" She raised her hand to enjoin silence. When the door had closed I again repeated my question. She replied, "Well, Charles, it

[1] *Journal*, S. P. R., November, 1906.

is the strangest thing I ever heard of, but when I awoke this morning your father informed me that he was awakened in the night and saw his mother standing by his bedside, and that when he raised himself to speak to her she glided away." This scene and conversation took place at about 8.30 A.M. on the morning of January 11th. Before noon we received a telegram announcing the death of my father's mother during the night.

We found that the matter did not end here, for my father was afterwards informed by his sister that she also had seen the apparition of her mother standing at the foot of her bed.

Thus, this remarkable apparition was manifested to *three persons independently*. My apartment, in which I saw the vision, was at the other side of the house to that occupied by my parents, and was entirely separate and apart from their room, while my father's sister was nearly 20 miles away at Heckmondwike.

Mr. Tweedale's experience and that of his father occurred at about 2 A.M.; the death took place at 12.15 A.M. The appearance to Mr. Tweedale's aunt, Mrs. Hodgson, took place eighteen hours after the death, news of which had been intentionally kept from the percipient on account of her serious illness. Mr. Hodgson has given us an account of this vision.

Mrs. Tweedale writes:

VICTOR PLACE, CRAWSHAWBOOTH, NR. RAWTENSTALL, LANCASHIRE,
June 22d, 1906.

I have carefully read my son's account of the strange appearance to him and my late husband, Dr. Tweedale. I perfectly well remember the matter, my son telling us of what he had seen and my husband telling me of the apparition to him, also the telegram informing us of the death during the night.

I distinctly remember my husband also being informed by his sister of the appearance to her.

(Signed) MARY TWEEDALE.

It should be added that Mr. Tweedale sees in the fact that the vision appeared to three persons independently after the death had occurred, a proof that the personality survives death.

It need scarcely be said that the facts are susceptible of other explanations. The apparitions may, as already suggested, have been due to a telepathic impulse from the mind of the survivors. Or, in the case of Mr. Tweedale and his father, we may suppose that the impulse actually originated with the dying woman, but that it remained latent in the subconsciousness of the percipients for some two hours before a favourable opportunity occurred for its emergence into the upper consciousness. We have evidence in the case of dreams, crystal visions, and in various hypnotic cases, that an impression may thus lie latent for some hours before it attains full realisation.

CHAPTER VII

POLTERGEISTS

VISITATIONS of raps and loud noises, accompanied by the throwing of stones, the ringing of bells, and other disturbances of an inexplicable kind, are from time to time reported by the daily papers as occurring in country villages, and, more rarely, in busy thoroughfares in our large towns. The squire, the parson, and the police constable are called in to investigate, and depart as a rule no wiser than when they came. Mysterious disturbances of the kind have been reported for many centuries. Mr. Lang has cited a case occurring as early as 856 A.D.[1] The phenomena, according to the same authority, have as wide a range in space as in time: they extend, literally, from China to Peru; they are found amongst Eskimos, Red Indians, and Malayans, as well as throughout Europe, and conform in most cases to the same general type. Amongst the most interesting cases recorded in our own literature may be mentioned the Drummer of Tedworth (1661) of which an account is given by Glanvil in *Sadducismus Triumphatus;* the disturbances at Epworth Parsonage,

[1] *Cock Lane and Common Sense*, p. 170.

the birthplace of John Wesley (1716–7); the Cock Lane Ghost (1762).

In a small and now rare book, called *Bealings Bells*, published in 1841 by Major Moor, F. R. S., for sale at a church bazaar, accounts are given, mostly at first hand, of some twenty cases of the kind. The disturbances described in *Bealings Bells* consisted generally of bell ringing, but they included also noises of other kinds, movements of furniture, throwing of crockery and small objects. One of the most characteristic disturbances which is reported in the Tedworth and Epworth cases, and formed the chief manifestation in the case of the Cock Lane Ghost, is the occurrence of raps on the woodwork of the bedstead, or, as in the Tedworth case, scratches as if made by nails on a bolster. In all cases the bedstead in the neighbourhood of which the noises occurred was occupied by a child, or children, to whom other circumstances point as the centre of the disturbance.

These "Poltergeist" disturbances, as they have been named, are of some historical importance, as it is to an outbreak of this kind in America that the beginning of the movement of modern Spiritualism may be traced. A farmer named John Fox occupied a frame house in Hydesville, a small hamlet in New York State. One night in March, 1848, raps were heard as if proceeding from the bedstead in which his two young daughters, Margaretta and Katie, were sleeping. The disturbance was repeated night after night and the neighbours crowded

in to listen. It was soon found that the raps, of which no one could discover the cause, would answer questions addressed to them, and it was gradually elicited by these means that the demonstration was produced by the spirit of a murdered pedlar. The marvel spread throughout the neighbouring townships. Other "mediums" were soon discovered, through whose agency the spirits were enabled to manifest their presence by raps. Gradually the spirits learnt to move tables and chairs, to play musical instruments, and do other things, such as the Poltergeist had been wont to do in the past. In a few years Spiritualism, thus incubated in the little country village of Hydesville, spread its wings and encompassed half the globe. Its growth in these early years was much encouraged by other outbreaks of the usual Poltergeist type, especially those in Stratford, Connecticut, in 1850, and in Ashtabula, Ohio, in 1851, full accounts of which are given in the Spiritualistic journals of the time.

To attain, therefore, a clear understanding of the physical phenomena presented to us by Spiritualist mediums, some of which are dealt with in the next chapter, it is essential to study the Poltergeist manifestations which are their lineal progenitors. The Poltergeist is, so to speak, the *fera naturæ* of Spiritualism.

Recently Mr. Andrew Lang has obtained, through the kindness of the Marquis d' Eguilles, copies of the official records of a trial in which a Poltergeist

case formed the subject of enquiry. The case is a fairly typical one, and will serve to illustrate the nature of the phenomena usually exhibited. In January, 1851, Thorel, a shepherd, summoned M. Tinel, Curé of Cideville, for libel. The Curé had, according to the plaintiff, accused him of sorcery, and had procured his dismissal from his employment. The defendant pleaded that he had only charged Thorel with "arrogating to himself the quality of sorcerer." It was shown by the evidence of many witnesses that for some weeks disturbances of an inexplicable character had plagued the Curé's house. M. Tinel kept two pupils, who gave evidence as follows: Gustave Lemonnier, the younger of the pupils, aged twelve, said that raps began when he was alone, on November 26th, and continued. He saw knives, blacking-brushes, a roasting spit, and M. Tinel's breviary leave their places and go through the window-panes. All sorts of objects flew about. He was struck in the face by a shoe, a candlestick, and by a black hand which afterwards disappeared up the chimney. A sort of human shape, dressed in a blouse, which appeared to be a spectre, followed him about for a whole fortnight. We learn from another witness that the child said that this spectre was only fifteen inches high. Once an invisible force pulled him by the leg, his comrade sprinkled some holy water, and the force let go; then a child's voice was heard crying, "Pardon, mercy." Notwithstanding all these disquieting events he did not ask to be allowed to

go home. Meeting Thorel, when with Tinel, he recognised in Thorel the spectre in the blouse.

Bunel, aged fourteen, the other pupil, corroborated Lemonnier, who, he said, had "lost consciousness" and "had a nervous attack" after meeting Thorel. The witness showed a black eye, caused by a stamping iron which flew in his face. He attested many eccentric movements of objects.

It was given in evidence further that Thorel had boasted of his power as a sorcerer, that he had used threats against M. Tinel, and that on being charged by the Curé with being the cause of the disturbance, Thorel had knelt to beg forgiveness of the younger boy, and had been struck with a stick by M. Tinel.

Most of the witnesses called in the case had only hearsay evidence to give; or could speak only of the occurrence of raps and thumps in the presence of the two boys, which they were satisfied the boys could not have produced. Two gendarmes had counted twenty-three broken panes of glass; but after spending an hour or two at the Presbytery had not seen or heard anything out of the way. But Cheval, the Mayor of the Commune, testified to having seen the tongs and shovel at the Presbytery "leave the hearth and go into the middle of the room." They were put back, and rushed out again. "My eyes were fixed on them to see what moved them, but I saw nothing at all." He also saw a "stocking dart like a thunderbolt from beside the bed on which the children were sleeping, to the

opposite end of the room." Lying in bed with the boys, his hands on their hands, and his feet on their feet, he "saw the coverlet dart away from the bed." M. Leroux, the Curé of Saussay, aged thirty, deposed:

I have to add that when at the Presbytery of Cideville, I saw things which I have been unable to explain to myself. I saw a hammer, moved by some invisible force, leave the spot where it lay and fall in the middle of the room without making more noise than if a hand had gently laid it down; a piece of bread lying on the table darted under the table; and we being placed as we were, it was impossible that any of us could have thrown it in that way. I also saw, after the Curé of Cideville and I had shaved, all the things we had used for the purpose placed as if by hand on the floor; the young pensionnaire of M. Tinel having called our attention to this, M. Tinel and I went upstairs to assure ourselves of the fact. Perhaps the child had had time to do this; but on coming away again, we had scarcely descended six steps of the stairs when the child told us that everything had been put back in its place. I went back alone and found everything was, in fact, in its place, with the exception of the mirror, and I am certain that the child could not have put everything back in its place in that way in so short a time. It seems to me inexplicable. Since that I have heard noises at the Presbytery at Cideville. I took every precaution in listening to them, even placing myself under the table to make sure that the children could do nothing, and yet I heard noises, which seemed to me, however, to come more especially from the wainscot.

The Marquis de Mirville, a well-known Spiritualist, who published an account of the case in a contemporary pamphlet, also gave his evidence. He testified that the raps showed intelligence and gave correct answers to several questions which he asked

on personal matters—his exact age, the number of letters in the names of his children and in the name of his house and commune. Further, the raps executed correctly Rossini's *Stabat Mater* and several popular tunes. The only physical phenomenon which M. de Mirville witnessed he described as follows :

One of the children said to me, "Look, Sir, look at this desk knocking against the other"; but as the child was in front of the desk I did not attach much importance to this fact,—not that I believed him to be the cause of it.

Madame de Saint Victor, aged fifty-six, said that she had heard the Angelus and one or two popular tunes rapped correctly. Further,

after Vespers, when I was at the Presbytery of Cideville standing quite apart from the other people there, I felt an invisible force seize me by the mantle and give me a vigorous shake. The same day also I saw three persons sitting on a small table in the Presbytery and it moved along the floor in spite of the efforts of two people to hold it back. Several people were there, amongst others my *femme de chambre*, but I cannot precisely say who the others were. Another day I saw the child sitting on a chair with his feet off the ground and his back not leaning on the chairback, yet the chair rocked with a movement which the child could not have given it, ending with the chair falling in one direction and the boy in another. The child was much frightened at this. A week ago when I was alone with the children I saw the two desks at which they were working fall over and the table on the top of them. The same day I took the children some St. Benoist medals in which I had faith, and every time the medals were placed on the desks not the least sound was produced there, the noise then being heard behind me in the wall cupboard ; but as soon as the medals were withdrawn from the desks the

noise was heard again in the desks. The same day the noise rapped out the tune of *Maître Corbeau*, and on my remarking, "Do you know nothing but that, then?" it sang the air of *Au clair de la lune*, and that of *J'ai du bon Tabac*. Yesterday, again, I saw a candlestick leave the chimneypiece in the kitchen and go and hit the back of my *femme de chambre*, and a key lying on the table struck the child's ear. I must say that I cannot tell precisely where the key was, as I did not see it start on its flight, but only saw it arrive. I was not frightened, only surprised. My son was with me when I heard the Angelus as well as the two children and the Curé, but during the other airs I was alone with the children. It was not possible for the children to do these things; I watched their feet and their hands, and could see all their movements. I think the shepherd Thorel could not have done them unless he had made a compact with the devil; for it seemed to me there was something diabolical in it all.

M. Robert de St. Victor, son of the last witness, testified that he had heard the tunes rapped out. He adds:

A week ago I went again to the Presbytery, and was alone with the children and the old servant maid; I placed one of the children in each of the windows of the room upstairs, I being outside, but in a position to observe all their movements in the position they were placed in; besides, they could not have moved much without risk of falling; and I then heard raps struck in the room, similar to those of a mallet. I went up to the room, and I saw one of the children's desks coming towards me, with no visible force to push it; however, I did not see it at the moment of its starting. I am convinced that the children had nothing to do with this, since they were still standing in the windows. Being one day at the Presbytery with the Mayor, I heard several loud blows such as the children could not have produced. I put my hand and ear against the wainscot, and very distinctly felt the vibrations and the place where the blows were struck.

M. Bouffay had heard raps and noises "in those rooms only where the children were." He adds:

> I also saw, both upstairs and downstairs, the perfectly isolated table move without any force that I could see to cause the movement. On the second visit I scarcely saw anything. On the third visit I saw pretty much the same things as on the first. I noticed that the children were perfectly motionless when the sound was produced, so could not have made it themselves. I heard it when the Curé was absent from the Presbytery as well as in his presence. It was impossible that either he or the children should have had anything to do with the noise, because it was too loud.

Further, the witness said that when he returned with M. Tinel and the children from the house of one of the inhabitants of the commune, where they had slept on account of the noises at the Presbytery, just as the children were going up to their room to ascertain if all was at an end, he saw a phantom-like vapour go with great rapidity through the kitchen door towards the room where the children were.

M. Bréard, when at breakfast with MM. Bouffay and Tinel, had heard an alarming knock on the floor beneath the table, and was certain that neither the children nor the Curé could have caused it.

Dufour, a postman, saw a table move without any one touching it. Lecontre, a carpenter, testified to a stone being mysteriously thrown. Leseigneur, eighteen years of age, a farmer, "saw a hammer impelled by some occult force start from the top of the table and fly at the window, break-

ing two panes. I also saw a shoe leave the pupil's foot and go and break a pane." He saw several other movements of objects, and was certain that neither of the pupils caused them.

Practically all the witnesses were confident that the movements and noises could not have been caused by the children or by M. Tinel. The only hint of a normal explanation which appears, in some eighty typewritten pages of evidence, is a statement by one or two of the witnesses that they had heard a M. Fontaine call out from the window that he had caught the younger boy in the act of cheating. Now Maître Fontaine, apparently the same person, was the counsel for the plaintiff, and was presumably precluded from giving evidence in his own person. He cross-examined Lemonnier, however, on the incident of the alleged detection, but the boy seems to have stood the examination with great self-possession, and made no damaging admissions. On Maître Fontaine's attempting to cross-examine the elder boy, Bunel, to similar effect, the Judge disallowed the questions as being irrelevant and contrary to the dignity of justice. The Court, in fact, seems to have been not very wise, perhaps not quite impartial, and certainly unduly sensitive as to its own dignity. In the summing up of the case the Judge found that "the most clear result of all the evidence is that the cause [of the disturbances] remains unknown." Thorel was nonsuited, on the ground that, if he had not done the things himself, he had said that

he had, and had, further, professed contrition for his offence.[1]

The case is an interesting one from several points of view. M. Tinel and his brother priests, and the Catholic witnesses generally, seem to have been quite satisfied of the diabolical nature of the visitation. Thorel, it is clear, brought his fate upon himself. The evidence leaves no doubt that he had freely boasted of his powers as a sorcerer; and that he had actually fallen on his knees and begged pardon of the Curé and of the child Lemonnier. Perhaps Thorel believed in his own powers. A curious illustration is given of the success of a suggestion made by him. Further, it appears from the evidence of Cheval, the Mayor, that Thorel was somehow associated with one Gosselin, a very learned man, who had presumed to visit a sick person with the view of curing him, and had been denounced by the Curé Tinel, and put in prison for his pains. Naturally Gosselin came out of prison vowing vengeance on the Curé.

The reference to witchcraft is exceptional amongst latter-day Poltergeists, at any rate in this country. But in this respect the Cideville case resembles the case of the Drummer of Tedworth already referred to, and other earlier narratives. Mr. Lang cites a case occurring in Lincolnshire in

[1] A copy of the court records is in the possession of the Society for Psychical Research. Mr. Lang gives a summary of the case in *Proceedings*, S. P. R., vol. xviii., pp. 454–463. An account of the case is given by R. Dale Owen in his *Footfalls on the Boundary of Another World*.

1867, in which a woman laid a spell upon the servant girl of a rival witch, and caused her to make knockings and move the furniture.[1] It is probable, in fact, that the idea of being bewitched, acting upon an hysterical temperament, may in many cases prove the efficient cause of disturbances.

But in other respects the Cideville case is, as said, a fairly typical one. It will be observed, first, that all the disturbances occurred in the presence of the two children; many of them in their immediate neighbourhood. Further, it appears, even by the description of the witnesses, that many of the things could have been done by the children in a normal manner. In most other instances the margin between what was possible and what, in the view of the witnesses, was not possible for the children to have accomplished, was very narrow. M. Leroux is satisfied that the child could not have replaced the toilet articles in so short a time. Madame de St. Victor is satisfied that the child could not have rocked the chair. Perhaps M. Robert de St. Victor had been a good child and had never played tricks with chairs. M. Bouffay is certain that the children could not have made the noise which he heard, because it was too loud.

But there remain certain things which cannot be so easily explained; such as the moving tongs and shovel testified to by Cheval, the flying hammer

[1] *Proceedings*, S. P. R., vol. xvii., p. 320.

witnessed by M. Leroux and by Leseigneur, or the candlestick which Madame de St. Victor watched in its flight.

Now the disturbances began at the end of November, 1850, and they ended on the 15th February, 1851, so that the occurrences were still fresh in the memory of the witnesses. More than one of the most inexplicable events are testified to by witnesses who, if strongly predisposed to belief in the marvellous, were, it is to be presumed, fairly well educated. Their testimony is given with some care, and there can be no doubt that these witnesses honestly believed that they had seen and heard things inexplicable by natural causes. It seems scarcely credible that the two little boys should have done the things themselves without detection (save in one doubtful case) and apparently without suspicion. The performance, it is to be remembered, lasted for some weeks; and the actors throughout the time were constantly called upon to play their parts with variations before an interested and not wholly uncritical audience.

The explanation in fact is not to be reached from the examination of any single case, least of all a case where personal enquiry and interrogation of the witnesses are no longer possible. But these outbreaks, as said, are numerous and monotonously similar in their general features. The person who is the centre of the disturbance, and in whose absence nothing takes place, is generally a child, boy or girl; more rarely a young servant maid. The

phenomena, again, move in the same groove. Many of them, *as described*, are quite inexplicable; especially is this true of the movements of objects, which are frequently spoken of as hovering, floating, or being gently wafted by an invisible agency. Members of the Society for Psychical Research have from time to time investigated on the spot a large number of these occurrences. Sometimes the disturbances had ceased before the investigator had actually arrived on the scene, and it has been possible only to interrogate the witnesses and examine the theatre of the display. But in one or two instances we have actually been present during the performance, and have detected trickery on the part of the children; in other cases trickery has been detected at the time by others; sometimes the child has subsequently confessed to trickery. It would not be fair, on the sole ground that trickery has been proved to account for some of the movements and noises in certain cases, to infer that trickery is the explanation of all the disturbances in all cases. The real justification for that conclusion can only be fully appreciated after a careful study and comparison of the records. Space would not permit of the proof being stated here at adequate length. But let us take, as an illustration merely, the evidence just quoted in the Cideville case. On a superficial reading it would seem as if the marvels recounted could not be due to the trickery of a couple of children. But we may see from the account given by the untrained observer

of a conjuring trick how widely the thing described may differ from the thing done. And it is to be noted, in the Cideville case, that very few details are given. When, for instance, Madame de St. Victor saw a candlestick leave the chimneypiece and hit the femme de chambre, we want to know what was her own position with reference to the chimneypiece, what was the position of the two children, the approximate distance of the children, the *femme de chambre*, and herself from the candlestick, and so on. The account implies that she actually saw the candlestick at rest, and then saw it change its position of rest for motion through the air. Did she really see this? Was she really watching the candlestick continuously, or did she merely remember to have seen it at one moment at rest, and, after a short interval, in motion through the air? It is difficult, without long training, to realise how small is the part played in general perception by actual sensation, especially in the case of retinal impressions, and how largely those retinal impressions are interpreted and supplemented by immediate and unconscious inference. When we are dealing with familiar matters the inference is generally correct; but the conjuror induces us to adopt a wrong inference—we "see" in a conjuring trick something which does not really take place.

Again, when, as happens in many cases, the account is not written down until some time after the events, errors of memory may distort the facts. Both kinds of error are admirably illustrated in Mr.

Hodgson's comments on the experiments in slate-writing made with Eglinton and Davey discussed in the next chapter. That such errors, of observation or of memory, are responsible for a great part at any rate of the marvels reported in Poltergeist cases, we can often find out by comparison of the accounts given by different witnesses of the same incident, or by the same witness at different times; or, more generally, by a comparison of the evidence given by educated and uneducated witnesses.

The following narrative, which we owe to Mr. W. G. Grottendieck, of Dordrecht, will serve to illustrate the two main sources of error above referred to. It is the more valuable as an illustration because Mr. Grottendieck is a particularly scrupulous and level-headed witness, and apparently a close observer. He writes as follows:

DORDRECHT, January 27th, 1906.

. . . It was in September, 1903, that the following abnormal fact occurred to me. Every detail of it has been examined by me very carefully. I had been on a long journey through the jungle of Palembang and Djambi (Sumatra) with a gang of fifty Javanese coolies for exploring purposes. Coming back from the long trip, I found that my home had been occupied by somebody else and I had to put up my bed in another house that was not yet ready, and had just been erected from wooden poles and *lalang* or *kadjang*. The roof was formed of great dry leaves of a kind called "kadjang" in Palembang. These great leaves are arranged one overlapping the other. In this way it is very easy to form a roof if it is only for a temporary house. This house was situated pretty far away from the bore-places belonging to the oil company, in whose service I was working.

I put my bullsack and mosquito curtain on the wooden floor and soon fell asleep. At about one o'clock at night I half awoke, hearing something fall near my head outside the mosquito curtain on the floor. After a couple of minutes I completely awoke and turned my head around to see what was falling down on the floor. They were *black stones* from one eighth to three quarters of an inch long. I got out of the curtain and turned up the kerosene lamp, that was standing on the floor at the foot of my bed. I saw then that the stones were falling through the roof in a parabolic line. They fell on the floor close to my head-pillow. I went out and awoke the boy (a Malay-Palembang coolie) who was sleeping on the floor in the next room. I told him to go outside and to examine the jungle up to a certain distance. He did so whilst I lighted up the jungle a little by means of a small "ever-ready" electric lantern. At the same time that my boy was outside the stones did not stop falling. My boy came in again, and I told him to search the kitchen to see if anybody could be there. He went to the kitchen and I went inside the room again to watch the stones falling down. I knelt down near [the head of my bed] and tried to catch the stones while they were falling through the air towards me, but I could never catch them; *it seemed to me that they changed their direction in the air as soon as I tried to get hold of them.* I could not catch any of them before they fell on the floor. Then I climbed up [the partition wall between my room and the boy's] and examined [the roof just above it from which] the stones were flying. They came right through the "kadjang," but there were no holes in the kadjang. When I tried to catch them there at the very spot of coming out, I also failed.

When I came down, my boy had returned from the kitchen and told me there was nobody. But I still thought that somebody might be playing a practical joke, so I took my Mauser rifle and fired five sharp cartridges into the jungle from [the window of the boy's room]. But the stones, far from stopping, fell even more abundantly after my shots than before.

After this shooting the boy became fully awake (it seemed

to me that he had been dozing all the time before), and he looked inside the room. When he saw the stones fall down, he told me it was "Satan" who did that, and he was so greatly scared that he ran away in the pitch-dark night. After he had run away the stones ceased to fall, and I never saw the boy back again. I did not notice anything particular about the stones except that they were *warmer* than they would have been under ordinary circumstances.

In a later letter dated 1st February, 1906, Mr. Grottendieck adds:

(3) The boy certainly did *not* do it, because at the same time that I bent over him, while he was sleeping on the floor, to awake him, there fell a couple of stones. . . .

(8) They fell rather slowly. Now, supposing that somebody might by trickery have forced them through the roof, or supposing they had not come through it at all,—even then there would remain something mysterious about it, because it seemed to me that they were *hovering* through the air; they described a parabolic line and then came down with a bang on the floor.[1]

Mr. Grottendieck explains that the stones, which have unfortunately been lost, were black and polished, but not crystalline, more like anthracite, but not with such sharp edges. They were light like anthracite.

He adds, in a letter dated February 13, 1906:

I hope that my plan is plain enough to give you an idea of the way in which I watched the stones coming through the roof. I was inside the room, climbed up along the framework to the top of the wall, held on with one hand to the framework, and tried to catch the stones with the other hand, at the same time seeing the boy lying down sleeping outside (in the

[1] *Journal*, S. P. R., May, 1906.

other room) on the floor behind the door, the space being lit up by means of a lamp in his room. The construction of the house was such that it was impossible to throw the stones through the open space from outside.

I wrote before that it seemed to me that the boy had been dozing all the time after I awoke him. I got that impression because his movements seemed to me abnormally slow; his rising up, his walking around, and everything seemed extraordinarily slow. These movements gave me the same strange impression as the slowly falling stones.

When I think over this last fact (for I remember very well the strange impression the slowly moving boy made on me) I feel now inclined to suggest the hypothesis that there might have been something abnormal in my own condition at the time. For having read in the *Proceedings* about hallucinations, I dare not state any more that the stones in reality moved slowly; it might have been on account of some condition of my own sensory organs that it seemed to me that they did, though at that time I was not in the least interested in the question of hallucinations or of spiritism. I am afraid that the whole thing will ever remain a puzzle to me.

Now, there is one serious discrepancy in this account. According to his original version Mr. Grottendieck's first step, after being awakened by the falling stones, was to go into the next room, and wake up the boy. The boy then searched the jungle, and on his return was told to search the kitchen. Mr. Grottendieck climbed the partition whilst the boy was searching the kitchen. But in his later letter he describes seeing the boy asleep whilst he is himself on the partition, trying to catch the stones as they fall. One of these two accounts then—we cannot tell which—must be inaccurate in regard to the important detail of the boy's position

at the time. If one is inaccurate, both may be. Further, if it is only by the accident of there being two accounts that this inaccuracy has become manifest, we are entitled to infer that there are probably other inaccuracies which happen not to have been manifested.[1]

Another class of error is illustrated by Mr. Grottendieck's statement that he "saw quite distinctly that the stones came right through the kadjang."[2] As Mr. E. T. Dixon has pointed out in his comments on the case, "no retinal image or succession of retinal images could have recorded the passage of stones through the kadjang; he can only have (unconsciously) inferred that the stones passed *through* from the fact that he was *not* aware of any retinal image representing them coming up to the ceiling from the boy's hand (or wherever they did come from)."

It is probable that the appearance of the stones falling slowly is also, as Mr. Grottendieck himself suggests, due to a sensory fallacy of another kind. This appearance is very commonly reported of the objects seen to move through the air in Poltergeist cases. Such an appearance would be caused by

[1] In a final letter, published in the *Journal* for July, 1906, Mr. Grottendieck, in reference to the discrepancy between his two accounts, suggests "that the boy must have returned from the kitchen during the time that I was climbing up the partition, and that he must have put himself down on the floor again to continue his sleep." But this supposition seems inconsistent with the statement in the original account that when Mr. Grottendieck came down from the partition the boy "had returned from the kitchen and told him there was nobody."

[2] The quotation is from the letter of the 1st February.

any temporary aberration in the estimation of time; and we know that such erroneous estimates occur in delirium, and under the influence of haschish, and other drugs,[1] and apparently in the partial dissociation of consciousness which accompanies many waking hallucinations.[2]

It should be added that the hallucinations described by the child Lemonnier may perhaps have been genuine. The young persons round whom these disturbances occur frequently describe hallucinatory figures seen by them, and there is evidence, in many of the cases investigated by or reported to the Society, of hysteria or marked abnormality of one kind or another.

It is only by a fortunate accident that we are able, here and there, to analyse the evidence for the spontaneous phenomena of the Poltergeist, and demonstrate its untrustworthiness. But in the next chapter we shall see how little to be trusted are the statements of competent witnesses as to phenomena

[1] See, *e. g.*, the account given by Mr. Ernest Dunbar of the influence of haschish on himself, *Proceedings*, S. P. R., vol. xix., p. 69.

[2] See Parish, *Hallucinations and Illusions*. The case has been quoted at length for its psychological interest. It only remains to add that the heathen Malay in the case was probably as innocent as the Poltergeist himself. Mr. H. N. Ridley, F. R. S., of the Botanical Gardens, Singapore, suggests that the "stones" which fell may have been seeds of some fruit dropped from the kadjang roof by fruit-bats. The description of the stones themselves, the manner of their falling, and the fact that they felt warmer than real stones would in similar circumstances, are all consistent with this explanation. So also is the fact, recorded in Mr. Grottendieck's letter of the 1st February, that "the same thing happened to me about a week before; but on that occasion I was standing outside in the open air near a tree in the jungle, and as it was impossible to control it that time (it might have been a monkey that did it) I did not pay much attention to it."

occurring in their presence under conditions which are certainly more favourable for observation than those obtaining in the Poltergeist disturbances.[1]

[1] For an analysis of the evidence in some of the cases investigated by the Society, see my article on Poltergeists in *Proceedings*, S. P. R., vol. xii., pp. 45–115. Also my *Modern Spiritualism*, vol. i., pp. 25–43. See also Mr. Lang's *Cock Lane and Common Sense*, his articles in *Proceedings*, S. P. R., vol. xvii,, p. 305, and elsewhere.

CHAPTER VIII

SPIRITUALISM

ONE of the chief objects which the Society for Psychical Research set before itself was the investigation of the physical phenomena of Spiritualism. The question seemed one of considerable importance, because from the belief in these phenomena as due to spiritual agency there had sprung up a quasi-religious movement of an international character which claimed at one period to number its adherents by millions. Moreover, apart from the credulous and unthinking majority, there was a small body of men whose opinions and testimony in any matter could not be lightly disregarded, who believed in and testified of their own experience to things which seemed, and perhaps still seem, inexplicable by any known cause. It was not easy to dismiss the whole subject as unworthy of investigation. The explanation of the facts recorded by Sir William Crookes and others does not lie on the surface. It may be that these facts will ultimately find their explanation in causes neither remote nor unfamiliar. But certainly no one at that time, and perhaps no one now, is in a position to affirm, with such certainty as we bring to the other affairs of

life, what the explanation may be. And whatever may be thought of the phenomena, it remained a palpable fact that there were tens and perhaps even hundreds of thousands in this and other civilised countries,[1] who had adopted a particular interpretation of these phenomena; that their conduct was influenced, their lives shaped, their aspirations determined, by that interpretation. The extraordinary growth of the movement, the number of its adherents, and their fidelity through evil and good report, made Spiritualism an important historical fact. If the beliefs and ideas of this large body of men and women were indeed based on fraud and delusion, it became a matter of some social importance to expose the deception. And it was clear that nothing short of a systematic and organised effort was likely to accomplish what was required.

Occasional revelations of fraud on the part of mediums had done little to damp the ardour of the believers. So long as it was possible to appeal to unexplained marvels in the past, so long was it easy for most minds to regard each successive exposure of trickery as an isolated incident. It was manifest indeed that the mediums had not suffered irretrievably, either in purse or reputation, from repeated exposures. Their business had no doubt met with a slight check in the four or five years immediately preceding the foundation of the Society for Psychical Research. But this was partly due

[1] Sir W. Crookes wrote, in 1871, that Spiritualism "numbers its adherents by millions" (*Researches in Spiritualism*, p. 33).

to the rival attractions of Theosophy and the thaumaturgic feats of Madame Blavatsky. Further, some of the most noted mediums of the earlier generation had withdrawn from the active pursuit of their profession. D. D. Home had retired into private life some years before. Mr. Moses' physical phenomena had ceased in 1880 or thereabouts. Slade was, indeed, willing, it was understood, to give sittings, but was prevented from coming to England by reason of the legal proceedings which Professor Lankester had instituted against him in 1876, and which were still pending. But the phenomena still continued, though the performers came somewhat less prominently before the public eye. Eglinton continued to give slate-writing performances for some years; and both he and other physical mediums exhibited materialisations—sometimes in surprising variety—at dark séances. Indeed, dark séances for materialisation, though now much more difficult of access to those who have given no pledges of fidelity, have continued down to the present time.

In 1882, therefore, though the physical phenomena of Spiritualism were certainly less startling and less abundant than they had been for some years previously, there seemed still no reason to doubt that there would be ample material for investigation. Indeed, Professor H. Sidgwick, in the course of his first Presidential address to the nascent Society, delivered at Willis's Rooms in July, 1882, after explaining that the Society would

by preference turn its attention to physical phenomena occurring in private circles, thought himself justified in assuming the existence of a mass of evidence of this kind. Mr. Sidgwick went on to express the hope that the occurrence of such phenomena would be more rapidly and extensively communicated to the representatives of the Society for impartial investigation. That hope was not destined to be realised. In the twenty-five years which have elapsed, whilst few opportunities have been afforded to the Society's representatives for continuous investigation of any sort, no positive results have been obtained worthy of record.

In short, just when an organised and systematic investigation on a scale not inadequate to the importance of the subject was for the first time about to be made, the phenomena to be investigated diminished rapidly in frequency and importance, and the opportunities for investigation were further curtailed by the indifference or reluctance of the mediums to submit their claims to examination. The researches of the Society have not, however, been entirely fruitless. On the one hand, some of us have had the opportunity of witnessing in private circles physical movements and other phenomena, claimed as due to occult forces, which on further examination have proved to be produced fraudulently. In two of these cases at least the "medium" was a well-educated man, with no apparent motive for deception, and the deception itself was of a systematic kind, involving careful preparation. The

proof that disinterested fraud of this kind may be practised by persons on whom the ordinary motives of pecuniary gain or notoriety can hardly be supposed to operate has been found of considerable value in interpreting some of the most puzzling problems of Spiritualism.

On the other hand, a series of careful investigations by some members of the Society has thrown valuable light on the nature of the psychological processes which facilitate deception at a spiritualistic séance. Accurate observation of the phenomena occurring at the ordinary séance is, indeed, rarely possible, because the sitting generally takes place in a subdued light; and, further, because many of the more striking phenomena occur impromptu, when the experimenter, not knowing what to expect, is not fully prepared for observation. But there was one particular manifestation which seemed to offer every facility for investigation,—the performance of writing on slates, as exhibited in England by the American medium, Slade, in 1876, and later by William Eglinton. The performance took place in daylight; it was fairly constant in its appearance, instances of completely unsuccessful séances being relatively rare; and from the nature of the exhibition the conditions presented, or seemed to present, the fullest opportunity for examination. A prominent Spiritualist wrote in 1886 of an exhibition by Eglinton: "The facts are of so simple a nature that they could as well be observed by any ordinary intel-

ligence as by the most scientific member of the Society for Psychical Research."[1] And it is difficult on reading the reports furnished by intelligent witnesses to avoid endorsing this statement. Briefly, the manifestation in its typical form is—or was a few years ago—as follows: Medium and sitter take their seats cornerwise at an ordinary wooden table without a cloth. A common school slate, with a fragment of slate-pencil on it, is held by one hand of each person, with the upper surface pressed close against the under surface of the table. The sitter, by direction of the medium, asks a question of the spirits. The sound of writing is heard. The slate is lifted up, and an answer to the question is found scrawled on its surface.

The witnesses of 1886 testified to writing on slates marked by the sitters; answers to questions written down and not shown to the medium; answers to mental questions; the receipt of long communications relevant to the conversation of the moment, and, occasionally, the reproduction of words from the given page of a book chosen by the sitter. The sittings took place in broad daylight; and many of the witnesses reported that they were permitted to bring their own slates, to mark the slates used, to tie or even lock the double slates, to hold them above the table, and to take other necessary precautions against fraud.

The present writer attended a séance with Slade

[1] Mr. Hensleigh Wedgwood, in the *Journal*, S. P. R., November, 1886, p. 457.

in 1876, and was for years after convinced that what he had seen could not be accounted for by any forces known to science. I am glad to say that my conviction has been shared by many conjurers, professional and amateur.[1] No Spiritualist marvel, indeed, has seemed more inexplicable, and none, happily for our purpose, has been so freely and fully attested. Thus in the Spiritualist journal, *Light*, for October, 1886, the testimony of about a hundred observers, amongst them many persons of intellectual distinction, is quoted as endorsing the genuineness of the manifestation.

In view of these considerations the Society selected the manifestation of slate-writing, as presented by the medium Eglinton, for the purpose of a crucial investigation. At the instance of the Society, several witnesses went in couples to the performance and wrote independent accounts of what they saw. And, from a minute examination, the late Dr. Richard Hodgson was able to demonstrate frequent and, as he showed, significant discrepancies in these separate accounts. In a word, the witnesses did as we all do—they selected for record what appeared to them the most important incidents and omitted what seemed to them irrelevant. But occasionally a witness more scrupulous than most would record some of these irrelevant incidents; and it is precisely in these that the key to the whole performance is to be found. Eglinton, it would thus appear, was habitually affected

[1] See the instances quoted in my *Modern Spiritualism*, vol. ii., pp. 204–7.

at these séances with a distressing cough; he would constantly—through fatigue, as he alleged—change the position of his limbs or even shift momentarily the hand which held the slate; sometimes the slate itself would be dropped on the floor; he would now and again go to the door to answer a summons from the servant. Ordinary good manners would prevent the visitor from taking notice of such incidents at the time, and generally they would leave no trace in the memory. But the cough would have served to hide the sound of an unlocked slate or an unfolded paper; the shifting of the hand admitted of the shifting of the slate also; the movement to the door gave opportunity for an actual substitution. In fact, the performance, as was soon to be proved, was commonly effected in one of two ways. The shorter messages were actually written by Eglinton on the under surface whilst the slate was being held under the table, and opportunity was subsequently found, without exciting the sitter's suspicions, to reverse the slate; the longer messages were written beforehand on another slate, and opportunity found for substitution. When the secret was guessed expert observers could watch all the processes of legerdemain throughout the performance.

The following extracts from independent accounts written by two Associates of the Society, Mr. G. A. Smith and the late Mr. J. Murray Templeton, will serve to illustrate the nature of the discrepancies and omissions actually observed, or

inferred, in the accounts. The incident described by Mr. Smith stands, it must be admitted, altogether beyond the scope of legerdemain; if we accept the description as accurate—and Mr. Smith as a witness stands probably well above the average—it would go far to justify the Spiritualist belief in the operation of a novel power wielded by an extraneous intelligence.

From Mr. G. A. Smith[1]

12th June, 1885

[The account was written on the day following the séance.]

. . . We now expressed our desire to get something written which could be regarded as outside the knowledge of any of us—such as a certain word on a given line of a chosen page of a book.

. . . . . .

I then went to the bookshelf, took a book at haphazard, without of course looking at the title, returned to my seat, placed the book upon the chair, and sat upon it whilst we were arranging the page, line, and word to be asked for. This point Mr. Templeton and I decided by each taking a few crayons and pencils from the table by chance, and counting them; Mr. Templeton had possessed himself of 18 pieces of crayon, and I had seized 9 pieces of pencil, we found on counting them; we therefore decided that the "controls" should be asked to write the *last word* of *line* 18 on *page* 9 of the book. This article I now produced, and laid it upon one of my slates, and Mr. Eglinton held the two close beneath the underneath of the table—the book of course being held firmly closed between the table and the slate. We then commenced conversing; in the midst of Mr. Eglinton's own remarks the writing was heard to commence. For about 25 seconds he was talking and the writing was going on simultaneously; he then ceased, and

[1] *Journal*, S. P. R., June, 1886.

the writing continued a few more seconds before the three taps came indicating its conclusion. The message we found was as follows: "This is a Hungarian book of poems. The last word of page 18 (page 9, line 18) is bunhoseded."

After we had observed that a mistake in the figures had been corrected in parenthesis, I opened the book at page 9, and we found that the last word on line 18 of that page was "bunhodesed." Remarking upon the fact that the last two syllables of the word had been transposed, we asked the "controls" if it was a mistake, and how it had arisen; we received the written reply: "Yes. We have not power to properly read the last word."

As a test experiment I think this may be regarded as a very successful and crucial one; for it is difficult to believe that Mr. Eglinton can have committed to memory the exact position of every word in every book on his bookshelves—containing some 200 books, or more. And it is easy for us to say with confidence that all his movements were so carefully watched that the slightest attempt on his part to open the book, or even to touch it, would have been detected almost before the attempt was made; and it is a fact that the book was never once touched by him, and could not possibly have had one of its leaves exposed to his view for an instant, let alone page 9 long enough to enable him to count down to the 18th line. Of course the test would have greater value as such had we been able to use a book which we could be certain he had never read; but if this point tells against the result, the fact that by a happy chance my selection caused a Hungarian book of poems to be used should surely counterbalance this evidential flaw to a great extent, and reduce the chances of his having memorised the position of every word in it to a minimum. That I was not *forced* to take this special book from its being in a particularly handy and prominent position, and that page 9 and line 18 were not "led up to" by Mr. Eglinton is obvious—from the fact that I made my selection without looking at the books; and that the page and line were determined by chance, then and there, as I have described.

But Mr. Templeton's version of the same incident, if briefer, is more to the point.

From Mr. Templeton

14th June, 1885

Next the final and most crucial test was proposed by Mr. Eglinton. It had been suggested to his own mind by a former test of my own, in which I had wished to preclude all possibility of any explanation such as thought transference. We arranged that Mr. Smith should turn to the bookshelves behind him, choose a book at random, in which we could fix upon a certain word in a certain line of a given page—which word was to be written for us. On taking a book Mr. Smith asked Mr. Eglinton if he knew what it was. Mr. Eglinton answered "Yes," and that as it was a rather trashy novel it might be better to choose another. Mr. Smith then took a small red-covered book from the opposite shelf, and this Mr. Eglinton said he did not recognise. As the theory of the medium's mesmeric influence over the sitters had been more than once put before me as a not impossible explanation I suggested we should fix the line by the number of crayons in a box before us, which gave us the 18th line; and in a similar way, from a separate heap of slate pencils, we obtained the number 9 for page. The last word in the line was chosen.

Now from this later version we learn (1) that the test was proposed by Eglinton himself; (2) that the book was not chosen entirely "at haphazard"; it was a second choice, and—a significant point—it had a conspicuous cover; (3) that the line and page were determined, not by taking a handful of pencils and crayons from larger heaps, as might have been inferred from Mr. Smith's account, but by taking the actual number of those articles present on the table. From the first account it might be inferred that Eglinton's only chance of meeting the

test would have been by opening the book then and there and writing the word. We know from other accounts that the trick was occasionally performed in this way. But with two not uncritical observers this method may have seemed too hazardous. It seems probable that the word had been written beforehand, and that the choice of book, page, and line were successively "forced" on the experimenters.

But all that Hodgson's analysis could in most cases demonstrate was that the accounts of the performance given even by intelligent witnesses were frequently inaccurate; and that from these inaccuracies it might legitimately be inferred that if Eglinton had practised trickery, that trickery would not have been detected. To many intelligent persons this method of argument seemed unsatisfactory. They felt that they, in witnessing the phenomena, had not been guilty of similar errors of observation, nor, in recording them, of similar lapses of memory. It was urged that Eglinton had abundantly demonstrated his possession of occult powers; and that trickery, even if the proof were admitted as sufficient, was only resorted to on occasions when his genuine powers failed him. A more conspicuous demonstration of the fraudulent nature of the whole performance was needed, and was forthcoming. One of the Society's members, the late Mr. S. J. Davey, himself in the first instance a victim of Eglinton's wiles, ultimately detected the cheat and set himself to imitate the performance. Mr. Davey

placed his services at the disposal of the Society and allowed us to introduce to him a number of sitters, on condition that they would write a full account of what they believed themselves to have witnessed. Mr. Davey revealed his methods to Dr. Hodgson, who arranged most of the sittings, and was present to watch the proceedings. In 1892, after Mr. Davey's death, he published [1] a full explanation of the methods by which Mr. Davey succeeded in performing his marvels.

Here is an account, written on the following day, of one of Davey's performances, as seen through the eyes of an intelligent observer. The writer of the account, Mr. H. W. S., was a comparative stranger to Mr. Davey. He had been told before the sitting that the marvels which he was to witness were not attributable to "spirits" or occult forces; and, as will be seen in the sequel, he attempts to explain them by physical means. He was by no means therefore in the mood of unquestioning acceptance common to those who visit spirit mediums. He knew that what he was to see was of the nature of a conjuring trick.

Report of Mr. H. W. S.[2]

February 11th, 1887.

After the very interesting scientific phenomena to which I was an eye-witness last night, it gives me much pleasure to detail the various astonishing feats displayed by Mr. Davey.

The apartment in which I was received was a well-stocked

[1] *Proceedings*, vol. viii., page 253, etc.

[2] *Proceedings*, S. P. R., vol. iv., pp. 468–470.

library, and the furniture, including the table at which we sat, was of the ordinary make and style, with none of the intricacies so necessary to the every-day conjurer; and I am convinced that the furniture of the room and its general surroundings played no part whatever in the accomplishment of the facts which I am going to narrate.

Having produced a small book-slate, Mr. Davey asked me to examine it, and to satisfy myself as to its simplicity of construction, etc. I did so; the slate was composed of two ordinary pieces of slate, about six by four inches, mounted in ebony covers hinged on one side with two strong plated hinges, and closed in front, beyond the question of a doubt, with a Chatwood's patent lock.

With the exception of a small escutcheon, bearing the initials of the donor, the slate was plain and substantial, and bore the strictest inspection, so as to entirely preclude the idea of chemicals or any other similar agent being used to it.

(*a*) After I had finished examining the slate, Mr. Davey asked me to write in the slate any question I liked while he was absent from the room. Picking up a piece of grey crayon, I wrote the following question: "What is the specific gravity of platinum?" and then having locked the slate and retained the key, I placed the former on the table and the latter in my pocket.

After the lapse of a few minutes I heard a distinct sound as of writing, and on being requested to unlock the slate I there discovered to my great surprise the answer of my question: "We don't know the specific gravity, JOEY." The pencil with which it was written was a little piece which we had enclosed, and which would just rattle between the sides of the folded slate.

Having had my hands on the slate above the table, I can certify that the slate was not touched or tampered with during the time the writing was going on.

(*b*) Next; having taken an ordinary scholar's slate and placed a fragment of red crayon upon it, Mr. Davey placed it under the flap of the table. I held one side with my hand as

before. I then heard the same sound as previously, and when the slate was placed on the table I found the following short address distinctly written: "Dear Mr. S——,—The substitution dodge is good; the chemical is better, but you see by the writing the spirits know a trick worth two of that. This medium is honest, and I am the only true JOEY." The writing was in red crayon, and was in regular parallel straight lines.

[Another experiment with the locked slate followed and then the writer continues:]

(*d*) Lastly, as requested by Mr. Davey, I took a coin from my pocket without looking at it, placed it in an envelope, and sealed it up. I am certain that neither Mr. Davey nor myself knew anything about the coin. I then placed it in the book-slate together with a piece of pencil, closed it as previously, and deposited it on the table; and having placed my hands with those of Mr. Davey on the upper surface of the slate, waited a short time. I then unlocked the slate as requested, and to my intense amazement I found the date of the coin written, by the side of the envelope containing it.

The seal and envelope (which I have now) remained intact.

This last feat astonished me more than the others, so utterly impossible and abnormal did it appear to me. I may also mention that everything which was used, including the cloth and sponge with which the slates were cleansed, were eagerly and thoroughly scrutinised by me, and I failed to detect anything in the shape of mechanism of any kind. Were I sceptically inclined towards Spiritualism, I should have attributed the feats I witnessed to it, but I am convinced from the *bonâ fide* manner in which Mr. Davey proceeded to perform his mysterious writing, Spiritualism plays no part in it whatever. Were I asked to account for the method by which the writing was done, or rather to advance any theory based upon which it would be possible to produce such phenomena, I should suggest a powerful magnetic force used in a double manner, *i.e.*, 1st, the force of attraction, and 2nd, that of repulsion.

But Mr. Davey has by great perseverance and study cultivated his scientific secret to such an extent that were it mag-

netism, electricity, pneumatics, or anything else, it would baffle the most accomplished in any of those branches of science to form even an approximate idea of his *modus operandi*.

Mr. H. W. S. was probably at least as good an observer as the great majority of those who have testified to marvels performed by spirit mediums. And he had, as we have seen, a great advantage over the ordinary Spiritualist, inasmuch as he knew that there was nothing occult or inexplicable in the business. But yet the performance, as described by him, might well seem to require the aid of magic; and indeed the distinguished naturalist, Dr. A. R. Wallace, has selected the events of this séance, with others, as being inexplicable by conjuring. So they are, if the account quoted accurately described what took place. But they seem inexplicable only because the account is highly condensed, and in the process of condensation the recorder has omitted—as Davey intended that he should omit—much that would have given a clue to the deception practised. Thus in his account of experiment (*a*) Mr. H. W. S. admits "the lapse of a few minutes" between his placing the key of the locked slate in his pocket and the sound of writing. He is even so a better recorder than many, who would have failed to record the interval at all. But he omits all that happened in that interval as irrelevant. He does so, no doubt, because of two assumptions, neither of which was justified: (1) that he had the slate under observation the whole time; (2) that the message was actually written at the moment when the sound

as of writing was heard. What actually happened, in accordance with the methods revealed by Dr. Hodgson, was somewhat as follows: Mr. Davey possessed two precisely similar locked slates, with common keys. Davey was out of the room whilst the sitter was writing his question in slate A. On his return he diverted the sitter's attention—probably by asking him to examine the under side of the table—and took advantage of the opportunity to substitute the locked slate B for A. He then gave the sitter some ordinary slates to clean and examine, and whilst he was thus occupied, Davey left the room with A, opened it, and wrote the answer to the question. On his return he found some other method of diverting the sitter's attention, and re-substituted A for B. The sound of writing was produced by Davey's finger-nail scratching the under surface of the slate, or by some similar device; and the miracle was accomplished.

It may seem incredible that Davey, who performed this particular trick at practically every séance, and sometimes, as in the present case, twice at the same sitting, should never have incurred detection, or even suspicion, in the double process of substitution described. But in the first place, he made a practice of carrying on the second experiment (*b*) whilst (*a*) was still in progress, so that the sitter had two slates instead of one to watch; and, further, he had several devices for distracting the sitter's attention, of which not the least effective was his conjurer's patter. Davey allowed me to be present at one of

the experiments, the victim being my own brother, Mr. A. Podmore. Davey took away the locked double slate A, under cover of a duster, whilst my brother was watching the slates already prepared for the next experiment. When he effected the resubstitution of the locked slates, he succeeded in completely diverting Mr. A. Podmore's attention by means of some weird narrative of marvellous events at a previous sitting. I saw that my brother's eyes were fixed on the narrator's face for the space of a minute or so. But at the end of the sitting my brother was convinced that he had not intermitted for an instant his watching of the locked slate.

The account above given, however, of the sitting with Mr. H. W. S. is unduly simplified. Miracle (*b*), as already said, was actually in progress before (*a*), was fulfilled. The sitter had been asked to clean some slates. Before the sound of writing was heard in the locked slates, Davey had taken two of these slates, together with a third slate, not cleaned by the sitter, on the under surface of which the long message in red chalk had been written before the sitting. On the clean upper surface of this prepared slate he placed a fragment of red chalk and covered it with one of the slates cleaned by the sitter, and left both in full view on the table. The second of the two slates cleaned by the sitter was then placed, as described in the account, under the flap of the table. Probably after a short interval the word "yes" was found written on the slate in answer to some question of sitter or medium. This "yes"

would be written at the time by means of a thimble pencil. The experiment would then be temporarily intermitted, first to allow of the unlocking of slate A, secondly to allow of the cleaning of that locked slate, and the preparation of another trial with the same (the record of this—experiment *c*—is omitted, as containing no new feature). What ultimately happened was that the *two* slates on one of which the red chalk message was already written were placed under the table, and then by means of substitutions, and reversals of position, the opportunity for which was afforded by the breaks in the experiment, the under of these two slates was eventually found to contain on the upper surface the message quoted in the text.

The explanation of experiment (*d*), which so profoundly puzzled the sitter, was even simpler. Mr. Hodgson's comment on the experiment is as follows:

I do not recall with certainty what the coin was. Let us suppose it was a shilling. Mr. Davey beforehand wrote the date of a shilling of his own in locked-slate A, placed this shilling in an envelope and sealed it up, and placed this envelope also in locked-slate A, which at the beginning of the experiment he had concealed about his person. He then requested the sitter to take a shilling from his pocket without looking at it, to place it in an envelope and seal it up, place it in the locked-slate B, etc. The sitting was at Mr. Davey's house, and Mr. Davey provided the envelope, from the same packet, of course, as the one already containing Mr. Davey's shilling in locked-slate A. The sitter was requested not to look at his coin, ostensibly, I believe, on the ground of precluding thought-transference, but really so that the sitter

might not know the difference between his own coin and Mr. Davey's. It is now plain that all the dexterity required in this experiment was a simple substitution.

But the greatest marvel of all remains to be recounted—the writing of a given line on a given page of a book selected from the bookcase by the sitter himself—an imitation of the trick already described as performed by Eglinton. Here is an account of one such experiment. The meeting was held in the library at Mr. Davey's own house, containing upwards of a thousand volumes. There were three sitters. One of these, Mr. Manville, describes this particular experiment as follows:

From Mr. E. Manville[1]

2d December, 1886.

[The séance had taken place on the previous evening.]

(*e*) Mr. Davey now said he would endeavour to get a given line on a given page of a book written for us. Mr. Venner therefore looked over the titles of the books ranged on the shelves and selected one *mentally*, without touching it with his hands; at this moment I suggested it would be better if I were to select the book, as I did not know Mr. Davey at all, whilst Mr. Venner did. Mr. Davey acquiesced. I selected a title. In order to decide what line and page we should select, I took a pinch of crayons from a box, Mr Pinnock doing the same. On counting, mine came to 6, Mr. Pinnock's to 11. Mr. Venner's came to 3. Mr. P. and I divided Mr. V.'s, making mine 8, and Mr. P.'s 12, so we decided that it should be p. 12, line 8.

[The first trial was a failure: the word "muddle" was written on the slate held under the table] and we apprehended it was on account of Mr. Venner and myself both

[1] *Proceedings*, S. P. R., vol. iv., pp. 455–6.

having chosen a book ; we therefore thought it would be best for Mr. Pinnock, who knew Mr. Davey no better than I, to select another book.

(*f*) This he did. We washed the two slates, laid them face to face on the table, when the following words were written : "The difference in this respect." Mr. Pinnock now took down the book he had selected from the shelf, and handed it to me ; I opened it at the 12th page and looked at the eighth line. I found the first two words completed a sentence ; then came the five words above, and then two more to finish the line. I said the written words were right, but not complete. The slate was covered again, and three more words were written : "Shakespeare and Beaumont." On looking at the book I found "Shakespeare" was the last word in the line, the other two being in the next line. I said a word was still missed out. The slates were put together again, and two more words written. On looking at the book these turned out to be the two words terminating the last sentence. I said there was still the word missing, and this time the word "between" was written, making the sentence complete : "The difference in this respect between Shakespeare and Beaumont." I then asked for the last word in the line by itself, and this was written "Shakes," which was correct, as Shakespeare was half on one line and half on the other. The name of the book was *Lectures on Shakespeare*, etc.

Mr. Pinnock himself and Mr. Venner, the other witness, explain that the title was chosen mentally, the book not being removed from the shelves.

Mr. Davey tried several experiments of the kind. The method of procedure was to write down the passage beforehand on a slate which could be subsequently introduced by substitution. The real difficulty, of course, was to induce the sitters to select the book which Mr. Davey had predestined

for the purpose of the experiment, and when the book had been selected in accordance with his wishes to determine also their choice of page and line. The book was "forced" upon the sitters' choice. Mr. Davey generally fixed upon a bright coloured volume, or one likely to be otherwise attractive, and placed it on the shelf most likely to meet the eye, ranging on either side of it some dull and inconspicuous volumes. I have watched him arrange books in my own bookshelves for the purpose. As in the present case, the experiment frequently failed on the first attempt. Sometimes Mr. Davey would himself reject the sitters' first choice, on the ground that the print was too small, or the subject-matter unsuitable. But it is surprising how often he succeeded in forcing the right book, at least on the second or third attempt. To secure a reasonable chance of coincidence in line and page he generally requested the sitters to choose numbers under 10, and his experience in number habits led him in many cases correctly to anticipate their choice. In the instance quoted, however, he resorts to another device. From Mr. Manville's account it would appear as if the division of the crayons had been a spontaneous move on the part of the sitters. But Mr. Venner in his report of the sitting tells us:

> The medium requested each of us to take a small handful of chalks out of the box on the table. Mr. P. took 11, Mr. M. six, and I three. The medium divided the three chalks I had selected between the other two. We had previously

agreed that Mr. P.'s number should represent a page, and Mr. M.'s number a line, of some book to be chosen mentally by one of the party, the medium promising to endeavour to reproduce on the slate the line so determined. In the present case it was of course the eighth line of the 12th page.

The sitting, it will be remembered, took place in Davey's own house. He had no doubt left exactly 20 pieces of crayon in the box, and by the method adopted of dividing the third lot of crayons there was little difficulty in arriving at the numbers already selected—8 and 12.

Dr. Hodgson's careful analysis of the accounts of Eglinton's miracles, and the skilful counterfeits —more skilful frequently than their originals—presented by Mr. Davey, must convince the dispassionate enquirer of the radical untrustworthiness alike of the senses and of the memory in matters of this kind. And this may almost be called a new discovery. The biologist, the astronomer, the physicist have, of course, learnt, each in his own department, the limitations of the senses, their narrow range, their fallibility, their habitual inaccuracy. But these defects are fairly constant, and when once ascertained can be guarded against or supplemented by the use of appropriate instruments and by allowance for the personal equation of the observer. But no training in the laboratory will do much to make a man a better observer at a Spiritualist séance. What is required in such circumstances is a power of observation which is able to resist the artifices employed to distract it, and which, if not

actually unremitting — since it would seem that nature itself forbids that,—is at least alive to its own lapses. And a power of observation of this kind is not demanded and is not exercised in the laboratory, and cannot be acquired except by training of a very special kind.

But in dealing with the phenomena presented by Spiritualist mediums, even errors of perception are often of less importance than errors of memory. The record of any event, or series of events, preserved in our memory is in no case comparable to a photograph. It is more like a picture or even a map. It is a selection, a work of art; and unfortunately in the present case the principle of selection, the æsthetic guidance, are supplied by the medium. In Dr. Hodgson's words:

> The source of error which I desire in particular to press upon the reader's notice is the perishability, the exceeding transience, the fading feebleness, the evanescence beyond recall, of certain impressions which nevertheless did enter the domain of consciousness, and did in their place form part of the stream of impetuous waking thought.
>
> It is, moreover, not simply and merely that many events, which did obtain at the sitting some share of perception, thus lapse completely from the realm of ordinary recollection. The consequence may indeed be that we meet with a blank or a chaos in traversing the particular field of remembrance from which the events have lapsed; but this will often be filled with some conjectured events which rapidly become attached to the adjacent parts, and form, in conjunction with them, a consolidated but fallacious fragment in memory. On the other hand, the consequence may be that the edges of the *lacunæ* close up—events originally separated by a considerable inter-

val are now *remembered* vividly in immediate juxtaposition, and there is no trace of the piecing.[1]

As a result mainly of the researches carried on by Mrs. Sidgwick, Dr. Richard Hodgson, and S. J. Davey, the investigators of the Society have come to adopt as a working formula that no evidence for the physical phenomena of Spiritualism can be regarded as of permanent value which depends for its validity upon the exercise of continuous observation.

Applying this test to the evidences for the physical phenomena of Spiritualism, we shall find them all wanting. Again and again the proof has seemed all but complete; and always, as the conditions have been perfected so as to close up the last loophole for fraud—always the "spirits" have refused to do their part. In all these years there is no record of which we can say, "Either the thing happened so, or the investigators have lied."

A field for the application of this formula can be found in the investigations which are still proceeding on the Continent into the physical phenomena occurring in the presence of the Italian medium, Eusapia Paladino. Eusapia has practised as a medium for many years; but the phenomena produced through her agency first attracted general attention in 1893. In the previous year a committee, including many persons of distinction, Professor Brofferio, M. Schiaparelli, Director of the Astronomical Observatory in Milan, Professor

[1] *Proceedings*, S. P. R., vol. iv., pp. 386, 387.

Lombroso, Professor C. Richet, etc., had held some sittings with her at Milan. In their reports, printed early in 1893, they expressed their conviction that some of the things witnessed could not be attributed to normal agency. Professor Richet, however, though attaching great weight to the phenomena which he had observed, was of opinion that complete proof of abnormal agency was wanting. In particular, M. Richet considered that the manner in which Eusapia's hands were held during the dark séances was suspicious. He writes :

During the experiments, Eusapia generally has the right and left hand held differently ; on one side her whole hand is firmly held ; on the other side, instead of having her hand held by the person next her, she merely places her hand on his, but touches his hand with all five fingers, so that he can feel quite distinctly whether it is the right or the left hand with which he is in contact.

This is what follows : at the moment when the manifestations are about to begin, the hand which is not being held, but which is lightly placed on the hand of the person on that side (for the sake of simplicity we will suppose that it is Eusapia's right hand, though it is in fact sometimes the right, sometimes the left),—the right hand, then, becomes very unsteady, and begins to move about so rapidly that it is impossible to follow its movements : it shifts about every moment, and for the mere fraction of a second it is not felt at all ; then it is felt again, and one could swear that it is the right hand.[1]

In the summer of 1894, Professor Richet invited Sir Oliver Lodge, Mr. F. W. H. Myers, Dr. Ochorowicz, and one or two others, to join him in

[1] *Annales des Sciences Psychiques*, January–February, 1893. See also a criticism of the articles in the *Annales*, by the present writer, in *Proceedings*, S. P. R., vol. ix., pp. 218–225.

investigating the powers claimed by Eusapia Paladino. The phenomena observed, when Eusapia's hands and feet were believed to be secured, and other precautions had been taken to prevent physical intervention on her part, consisted mainly of the movements of articles of furniture at a certain distance from the circle; the lifting of a heavy table from the ground; the movement of smaller objects from one part of the room to another; the sounding of notes on musical instruments; and grasps and touches felt by the experimenters on various parts of their persons. The séances for the most part took place in a very subdued light, so that the proof of Eusapia's non-intervention rested mainly, though not entirely, on the secure holding of her hands. Nevertheless, the phenomena were so impressive that Sir Oliver Lodge and others expressed the conviction that some of the things observed could not be accounted for by any known agency.

When, however, accounts of these experiments and of the conclusions arrived at were printed in the *Journal* of the Society, Dr. Hodgson immediately challenged the accuracy of the observations, mainly on the ground that it did not appear that Eusapia's hands and feet had been held in such a way as to make fraud impossible. Finally, in the summer of 1895, another series of sittings was held with Eusapia in this country. Very early in the series suspicious movements on the medium's part were observed. Later, Dr. Hodgson himself joined

the circle; and it was conclusively shown that Eusapia was availing herself of the peculiar method of "holding" previously described by Professor Richet to get one hand free, and then execute the movements observed. Briefly, her method is to begin by allowing one hand to be firmly held by the sitter on one side (say the left), and to let the fingers of the other, the right hand, rest on the hand of the sitter on the other side. Then, in the course of the rapid spasmodic movements referred to by Professor Richet, she approximates the hands of the sitters on either side of her, until they are so near together that one of Eusapia's hands (the left) will do duty for two—being grasped by one of the sitters' hands and resting its fingers on the hand of the other sitter. The desired "phenomenon" is then brought about, and the right hand restored to its former position. Other devices of a similar kind were observed or inferred; and probably there are yet others which have escaped detection.

Dr. Hodgson's conclusion that all the physical phenomena produced in Eusapia's presence from first to last were due to fraud, was at the time shared by most of the leading investigators of the Society for Psychical Research. In 1898, however, there were held in Paris some strikingly successful séances, at which Professor Richet and the late F. W. H. Myers were present, and subsequently these two gentlemen and Sir Oliver Lodge took occasion to reaffirm their belief in the genuineness of some

at least of the physical manifestations occurring in the presence of Eusapia Paladino.[1] Within the last few years several well-known Italian men of science, including some who, like Professor Morselli, had for long proclaimed their disbelief in the subject, have investigated and declared their conviction of the genuineness of some of the phenomena occurring in the presence of Eusapia. It is generally admitted, however, that Eusapia will use physical means when the conditions permit of her doing so; and that the phenomena recognised as genuine give little support to the hypothesis of spirit intervention. If not wholly due to fraud and illusion, they can best be attributed to the operation of some force emanating from the medium's organism. The description of the feats witnessed, in fact, strongly suggests that the medium has the power of extruding false limbs—"pseudopodia"—from her person, or is possessed of some force (ectenic force) capable of acting on material objects at a short distance beyond the limits of her material organism.

The difficulty in accepting the accounts given lies precisely in the fact that the distance is so short. The objects moved are all situated within the near neighbourhood of Eusapia; the proof that she did not move them by normal means depends, as before, chiefly on the secure holding—or, more rarely, binding—of the medium's limbs and on the accuracy of the experimenters' observation. The

[1] *Journal*, S. P. R., March, 1899, pp. 34, 35.

medium exhibits a persistent aversion to the use of recording apparatus: she dislikes smoked paper (for taking impressions of finger prints, etc.); at one séance it is recorded that she fought hard—and even bit—to prevent the use of a photographic plate.[1] Even more significant is her treatment of two tests recently devised by a circle of Italian medical men. At the first sitting a clockwork cylinder, covered with blackened paper, was placed inside a bell-glass, secured from interference by sealed tapes. The object of the test was to obtain a vertical mark on the cylinder; and the key of the electric circuit through which this end could be accomplished was enclosed in a securely fastened and sealed cardboard box. In the event the sealed tapes were torn off from the bell-glass; the lid of the cardboard box was forcibly removed, and the key then depressed. The test was thus rendered useless. Eusapia explained, however, that if woven material instead of cardboard had been used to protect the key, it could have been moved without interference with the apparatus. Acting on the hint the experimenters prepared for the next séance a new apparatus. Inside the cabinet was placed a manometer—an open tube of mercury with a floating pointer which would automatically register any movements of the mercury on a scale. The tube was in connection with a vessel full of water, and closed with a rubber capsule. Pressure on the

[1] She has allowed some photographs to be taken, but none that I have seen add materially to the strength of the evidence.

capsule would, of course, force up the mercury in the tube. The vessel of water was enclosed in a wooden box, the side of which rose high above the capsule. The top of the capsule was blackened. In place of a lid the box was covered with cloth, so as to prevent pressure on the capsule by normal means. At the close of the séance the mercury was found to have risen; but the cloth covering was torn. The experimenters still attach weight to the result of the experiment, on the ground that the wooden box was outside the cabinet, so that no one could have approached it without being seen. They add: "We do not know why the stuff which had covered the wooden box was torn. Certainly Eusapia did not understand the importance which would have attached to the experiment, if it had remained intact." [1]

It cannot be said that these recent researches have done much to strengthen the case for Eusapia's genuineness. The phenomena are still of the same indeterminate kind; they take place still under the same dubious conditions; and for their substantiation we still have to trust entirely to the accurate observation of the witnesses, working under conditions not of their own choosing. Sometimes, as above indicated, the circumstances attaching to the feats are in themselves extremely suspicious. But if we can attach little weight to the records, it is impossible not to be impressed by the scientific standing and the obvious sincerity of the witnesses.

[1] *Annals of Psychical Science*, May, 1907, p. 385.

Professor Richet, Dr. Maxwell, Professor Morselli, Professor Foa, and other Italian savants have no manner of doubt that they have witnessed in Eusapia's presence phenomena inexplicable by any known force. If they do not enable us to share their conviction, they at any rate compel us to hold our judgment in suspense. There is at any rate a problem here, for the solution of which we must wait. If the things are genuine, we want to know how they are done; if fraudulent, how it is that so many competent observers have come to believe in their genuineness.

CHAPTER IX

ON COMMUNICATION WITH THE DEAD

SO far the work of naturalisation has proceeded with smoothness: if we have seen reason to reject any applicants for admission it is on the ground that their credentials are unsatisfactory, not because they lie under any suspicion of an alien allegiance. If the facts of telepathy are admitted it does not yet appear that they carry us beyond the material world, the world which includes alike neural processes and ethereal undulations. The same may be said, with perhaps some reservations, of the alleged physical phenomena of the séance room. The exhibitions of materialisation, spirit photography, and slate-writing which found favour a generation ago have received no scientific endorsement of late years, and are now so generally discredited that they need scarcely be considered seriously. The manifestations which remain, such as raps, movements, and touches,—even if their occurrence apart from fraud should be incontrovertibly established,—would not necessarily involve the assumption of the agency of any "spirit" other than that of the medium herself. As already said, the phenomena, especially as observed in the presence of Eusapia Paladino, have led recent Italian experi-

menters to revive the theory, originally put forward half a century ago by Thury and de Gasparin, of a force emanating from the organism of the medium, and controlled presumably by her nervous system. If such a force should be proved to exist, it will afford material for the physicist and the physiologist, and will no doubt considerably enlarge our conception of the potencies of living bodies. But it was not for this that the Society for Psychical Research was founded. The distinguished men who in 1882 associated themselves in the venture were certainly not attracted merely by the prospect of enlarging the domain of physics or biology. They came together in the hope of finding empirical proof of the survival of the soul after the death of the body. No one who has read Myers's brief autobiography, or the Memoir of Henry Sidgwick, can doubt that it was this hope which formed the motive power. But it is when we approach this subject that the real difficulties of psychical research begin. We are menaced with opposition from without and danger from within. The opposition comes principally from two quarters. There are those who feel that the very quest involves a kind of impiety; that the Ruler of the world has fixed a gulf between shore and shore, so that no communication may pass from that side to this.

> Nequidquam Deus abscidit
> Prudens Oceano dissociabili
> Terras, si tamen impiæ
> Non tangenda rates transiliunt vada.

The attitude here indicated is as old as human history. It was old enough for Horace to treat it half in jest. It has been displayed at every step in human progress. There are many of the faithful now who would in their hearts join with Imaum Ali Zadi in placing all human knowledge under the ban. Said the pious Cadi, in refusing an English traveller's request for statistical information, "God created the world, and shall we liken ourselves unto him in seeking to penetrate the mysteries of his creation? Shall we say, behold this star spinneth round that star, and this other star with a tail goeth and cometh in so many years? Let it go! He from whose hand it came will guide and direct it." [1]

On the other hand, those who have not the assurance of faith are mostly indifferent—an indifference which occasionally merges into active hostility—to any attempt to solve the problem.[2] Of this indifference there are no doubt many causes. But there are two that specially concern us. In the first place, the many are indifferent because they have no hope of any result from such an enquiry. The problem is as old as the world; but apart from the claims of revelation, there is nowhere any hint of a solution. But to this it may be answered that there has never yet been any serious attempt to find

[1] From Layard's *Nineveh and Babylon*, quoted by W. James, *Principles of Psychology*, vol. ii., p. 641, note.

[2] See Mr. Schiller's article (*Proceedings*, S. P. R., vol. xviii., p. 416) on the result of a recent American questionnaire as to the desire for knowledge of a future life.

the solution—at least no serious attempt by modern investigators, armed with the latest weapons from the scientific armoury. It is a vicious circle: there is no effective desire because men have despaired of success: and success will only come, in this as in any other quest, to men whom the desire of knowledge urges to eager and persistent endeavour. But there are indications now that the question is being asked more methodically and with more perseverence than ever before. Ten years before the foundation of the Society for Psychical Research Henry Sidgwick wrote: "I sometimes feel with somewhat of a profound hope and enthusiasm that the function of the English mind, with its uncompromising matter-of-fact-ness, will be to put the final question to the Universe with a solid, passionate determination to be answered which must come to something."[1] And since those words were written, the enquiry has been steadily pursued and is still proceeding.

But the indifference of the many is also no doubt partly due to distrust of the methods of the enquiry, and of the temper of the investigators. It has been pointed out in the introductory chapter that in the early years of the Society the appreciation of the evidence was a joint work. Further, the lines of work were laid down by the advice and pursued under the personal direction of Henry Sidgwick. His wisdom, his clear insight, the essential sanity of his mind withheld us from rash and premature

[1] *Memoir*, p. 259.

conclusions. Of late years individual investigators have pursued their separate lines of research; and it may be thought that the will to live, which was so dominating an element in the personality of F. W. H. Myers and of Richard Hodgson, may unawares have influenced their judgment and so have led them too hastily to exchange the rôle of investigator for that of propagandist. This, in short, is the danger from within which must always attend upon any enquiry making so intimate and irresistible an appeal to human hopes and affections.

A word of caution is perhaps necessary as regards the kind of spirit communication to which the facts to be cited in the following chapters seem to point. If such communication is at all possible, it would seem that it is of rare occurrence and beset with considerable difficulties; and further that the communications themselves are liable to be embarrassed, incoherent, and curiously defective, if not actually evasive. Not only do these characteristics of the communications, which are to be found especially in the trance utterances discussed in Chapter XIII., necessarily make the desired proof much more difficult of attainment, but they inevitably suggest suspicions of their mundane source. Dr. Hodgson was himself satisfied, after an exhaustive study of the trance phenomena, that these suspicious characteristics were not inconsistent with the Spiritualist interpretation; and that in many cases they even lend additional support to that hypothesis; and, speaking generally, those investigators who

of recent years have given the closest study to the case of Mrs. Piper and other automatists have been led to attach increasing weight to the hypothesis of some form of spirit communication. In any case we have clearly no right to lay down *a priori* the standard to which spirit communications should conform. Mr. Schiller has some pertinent remarks on the characteristic defects and incoherences of these trance communications: "That spirit communication should be difficult," he says, "is what I should have inferred on physical grounds, that it should be rare and exhibit *a gradual diminution of interest in and memory of our concerns* is precisely what I should have inferred on the supposition that the human personality takes its known psychological constitution with it. The wonder is rather that the deceased should trouble themselves at all about us and have leisure to devise means of communication with the world they have left. For if we are to conceive them as surviving death at all, it must be as *ipso facto* entering into a new and engrossing phase of existence (all the more engrossing because of its novelty) and as needing to adapt themselves to new conditions of existence. And it is not unreasonable to suppose that even if they could effectively desire to communicate they might not find the means available. Hence there need be no trace of cynicism in the suggestion that probably the dead forget the living far more rapidly even than the living forget the dead: it merely expresses a psychological necessity. We forget because life

absorbs our energies and robs us of the leisure to remember; the departed, if they survive, *must* forget, because a new life *must* absorb their energies and cut off their associations with the past to an indefinitely greater degree. Is there not, therefore, more than a touch of human conceit in the imagination which depicts the spirits of the dead as having no other function than to hover invisibly around the living as futile spectators of the follies and the crimes of earth? Nay, will not the notion appear grotesque as soon as we take up a less geocentric position in our eschatology and look at the matter from the point of view of the 'dead'?"[1]

It is perhaps hardly necessary to claim that the *possibility* of such communication is still an open question. The possibility has no doubt been denied. "The question is . . . whether departed spirits enter into communication with living men by mediums and by incarnation. The scientist does not admit a compromise; with regard to this he flatly denies the possibility . . . the facts as they are claimed do not exist, and never will exist."[2] But for most men, whether they claim the title of philosopher or no, the possibility of anything can only be proved by experience, and until experience furnishes adequate material, the only prudent course is suspension of judgment. The philosopher who, antecedently to experience, should venture to pronounce the word "impossible," even in the

[1] *Journal*, S. P. R., July, 1898, pp. 276, 277.
[2] Münsterberg, *Psychology and Life*, p. 252.

region of pure mathematics, would write himself down belated. But if we admit that experience only can prove or disprove the possibility, we must further recognise that the proof which we are seeking is not likely to be salient or irresistible. We can hardly imagine any single incident which would give us satisfactory proof of the survival of a human personality. The proof, or disproof, must be in its nature cumulative. At a certain stage of the accumulation we may say, "The facts are, no doubt, not inconsistent with the hypothesis of the agency of the dead; but there are other interpretations in the present state of our knowledge equally adequate and at least equally probable." That is the stage at which our enquiry would seem now to have arrived. We have accumulated a large number of observations and experiments, open to various interpretations, but open amongst others to this particular interpretation, that they indicate in some fashion the presence of "dead" men and women. The man who at the present stage of the enquiry invites us, on the strength—or weakness—of the evidence so far available, to acclaim the proof of human immortality, may be doing serious injury to his own cause. But the other man who, because our present ignorance does not enable us to decide what is the true meaning of these elusive "seemings," condemns the whole enquiry as abortive, has surely no title to speak in the name of Science.

In the chapters which follow I shall aim at presenting fair samples of the evidences which have

been or may be held to point to the agency of the dead, and to appreciate, as impartially as I can, their present value and significance. The enquiry is still proceeding, and, by the consent of all who are engaged in it, the evidence for any certain conclusion, positive or negative, is still insufficient.

CHAPTER X

PHANTASMS OF THE DEAD

IN the next two chapters it is proposed to pass in review those spontaneous apparitions—"ghosts" warning dreams, haunted houses—which have been held in all ages to indicate the presence of the dead. We have already in previous chapters considered some instances in which the apparition approximately coincided with the death of the person represented, and have seen that in such a case the vision may reasonably be interpreted as originating in the mind of a still living agent. Further we have seen that in some cases where it can be clearly proved that the vision occurred some hours after the death, we should yet not be justified in assuming the agency of the dead.[1] After all reasonable deductions have, however, been made, there will be found to remain a considerable number of well-attested apparitions which *prima facie* refer rather to the dead than to the living. The simplest case of all is that in which the fact of the death is announced by dream, vision, or inner voice before the news could have reached the percipient by normal means, but at such an interval after the death as to make the

[1] See above p. 141.

supposition of latency no longer tenable. We could not of course expect that such cases would be as numerous as those in which the dream or vision approximately coincides with the death, if for no other reason than that generally the news would be conveyed, by letter or telegram, to those most nearly concerned within a day or two at most. We have relatively very few cases of the kind in our collection; and even if we grant that the instances reported to us have been diminished in number by the instinctive tendency, already pointed out, to reduce the interval between the death and the annunciatory vision, the number is still far too small to permit us to found any generalisation upon it. For it must be remembered that impressions which occur some days or even a week after the death offer much more scope for chance coincidence than those which fall within twelve hours of the death.

But even if narratives such as those referred to were much more numerous than is in fact the case, we should still be left in doubt as to their actual significance. For we cannot exclude the possibility that the percipient's impression may have had its origin in the minds of the survivors, mourning over the dead. Such an explanation is unmistakably indicated by the following narrative.

No. 42. From Mr. Stephen Peebles[1]

Satank, Colorado, January 2nd, 1894.

We live on a farm ten miles from Glenwood Springs. At

[1] *Journal*, S. P. R., December, 1895.

Glenwood Springs a Mrs. Walz, whom my wife has known for some years, lives with her husband. She was the mother of two children, one an infant. This Mrs. Walz, our daughter (who is married and lives near us—a mile away), and a Mrs. Zimmermann have been, from the time of their first acquaintance, intimate friends. Mrs. Zimmermann lives four miles from us, fourteen miles from Glenwood Springs.

My wife had not seen Mrs. Walz for months, had not heard anything about her for some time, and did not know of any sickness in her family.

On Sunday morning, December 17th, while my wife was dressing, and before she had seen or spoken to any one but me, she told me of a dream she had had in the night. She dreamed that Mrs. Walz's baby was dead, and that she was at their house. She wished to do certain work that needed to be done in the house, but she was not dressed. While she was struggling vainly to get her clothes on, Mrs. Zimmermann came into the dream, doing this work.

It was about six o'clock when my wife told me this. About ten o'clock our daughter came in and told us that she and her husband had been to Glenwood Springs the day before to attend the funeral of Madgie Walz's baby, and that Hattie Zimmermann was there doing the work which has to be done on such occasions.

Our son was out that night and heard of the death of the child; but he did not return till one o'clock—long after we were in bed—and he was not up, nor had he spoken to his mother, when she told me the dream. She heard him come in, and she thinks the dream came after that.

STEPHEN PEEBLES.

Mrs. Peebles writes:

My husband has read the above to me. My dream was as he has told it, and my recollection of the circumstances connected with my telling it to him and its verification is as he has given them.

D. L. PEEBLES.

Mr. F. M. Peebles, son of the percipient, writes:

[Satank, Colorado, January 2nd, 1894.]

I was away from home on that evening of December 16th, and was told of the death of the child, which formed the subject of my mother's dream. I think this was about eight or nine o'clock in the evening, but I did not return home until after midnight, and did not speak to my mother about what I had heard until near noon the next day.

Frank M. Peebles.

Here it will be seen the dream was concerned with the domestic cares consequent on the death, rather than with the death itself. It would seem therefore most probable that the dream originated in the mind of the dreamer's son or daughter who were acquainted with the facts. In any case, we should hardly be justified, in default of any analogous instance, in invoking the agency of the dead infant.

A similar explanation is indicated in the following case. Mr. Russell, member of a church choir in San Francisco, died quite suddenly at 11 A.M. At 1.30 P.M. the same day a friend went to the house of the choirmaster. Whilst he was telling the news to the ladies of the household, the choirmaster himself, who was at the time occupied upstairs, saw an apparition of the deceased.[1] Here the vision coincided, not with the death, but with the recital of it to the relatives of the percipient. Again, in each of the five cases which follow the percipient's impression occurred some time after

[1] *Proceedings*, S. P. R., vol. viii., p. 214.

the death, but only a few hours before the receipt of the news by normal means.

No. 43. From Miss Kitching[1]

Miss Kitching, then in Saratoga, N. Y., on the morning of the 23rd August, 1888, had in a dream a painful impression of the death of her brother in Algeria. But the death had taken place on the 20th, and the cablegram announcing it had been designedly held over in New York; from which town it was actually despatched to Saratoga a few hours after the dream.

No. 44. From Mrs. G. T. Haly[2]

122 Coningham Road, Shepherd's Bush, W.

On waking in broad daylight, I saw, like a shadowed reflection, a very long coffin stretching quite across the ceiling of my room, and as I lay gazing at it, and wondering at its length and whose death it could foreshadow, my eyes fell on a shadowy figure of an absent nephew with his back towards me, searching, as it were, in my bookshelf. That morning's post brought me the news of his death in Australia. *He was six foot two or three inches* in height, and a book had been my last present to him on his leaving England, taken from that very bookcase.

Mr. Gurney saw Mrs. Haly in November, 1884, and learnt that this, and an appearance of lights, are the only hallucinations of sight Mrs. Haly has had, and that she clearly recognised her nephew's figure. The event occurred in the winter of 1872–3, some six weeks after the nephew's death. It will be noted that, though the death had occurred several weeks previously, the phantasm was not

[1] *Journal*, S. P. R., June, 1893.
[2] *Proceedings*, S. P. R., vol. iii., p. 91.

seen until news of the event had reached England in the ordinary course of post.

No. 45. From Mr. George King[1]

Mr. George King (November, 1885) on the night of December 2, 1874, after being present at a Conversazione at King's College, London, dreamt that at a brilliant assembly his brother advanced towards him. He was in evening dress, like all the rest, and was the very image of buoyant health. "I was much surprised to see him, and, going forward to meet him, I said: 'Hallo! D., how are you here?' He shook me warmly by the hand and replied: 'Did you not know I have been wrecked again?' At these words a deadly faintness came over me. I seemed to swim away and sink to the ground. After momentary unconsciousness I awoke, and found myself in my bed. I was in a cold perspiration, and had paroxysms of trembling, which would not be controlled. I argued with myself on the absurdity of getting into a panic over a dream, but all to no purpose, and for long I could not sleep."

The newspapers on the following morning contained an account of the foundering of the *La Plata*, the ship in which Mr. King's brother had sailed, on November 29th.

No. 46. From the Rev. G. M. Tandy, Vicar of West Ward, Cumberland[2]

Mr. Tandy had called upon a friend in a neighbouring village and carried away with him a newspaper, still in its wrapper. Some hours after returning home he saw a lifelike apparition of his intimate friend Canon Robinson. On subsequently removing the wrapper of the newspaper he found an account of the death of Canon Robinson, of which he had not previously heard.

[1] *Proceedings*, S. P. R., vol. v., p. 455.
[2] *Ibid*, p. 408.

No. 47. From Mr. Cameron Grant[1]

Mr. Grant, who was at the time up country, in Brazil, had on the night of the 24th December, 1885, an impression of death, and connected it with a member of Lord Z.'s family. On that day Lord Z. died.

On the 26th January the impression of death was renewed. Both the impressions are attested by entries in Mr. Grant's diary.

On the 27th January there is an entry as follows: "Very tired, but did not sleep a wink all night. I am sure that something has happened to [a member of Lord Z.'s family]. I heard every hour strike, and kept thinking of [all the members of the family] but *not* of the dear old gentleman [*i.e.*, imagining *them* in sorrow, but not Lord Z. himself]. I got up and wanted to draw him. His features seemed before me. I had before shown Mr. Catlin a face in the *Graphic* that was like him, also that of a dead man. I had the greatest difficulty not to draw his portrait with his head forward and sunk on his breast, as if he had been sitting in a room with a window on his right hand and an old man-servant;—and then his head just went forward, and he fell asleep. Weeks ago I thought of him,—some time about Christmas; and ever since I have been feeling [pity, etc., for members of family]."

On the next day, Thursday, January 28, 1886, Mr. Grant received by accident a Scotch paper in which Lord Z.'s death was mentioned,—but apparently without the precise date.

I have grouped these five cases together, because there would appear to be some connection between the percipient's impression and the news of the death which followed a few hours later. It is not easy to conjecture the precise nature of this

[1] *Proceedings*, S. P. R., vol. viii., p. 212. See also *Phantasms of the Living*, vol. ii., p. 690.

connection: for we do not know enough of the surrounding circumstances. But we may note, as probably not without significance, the fact that the telepathic message came just at the moment when the news of the death was known, or might have been known, to persons in the vicinity of the percipient—that is, when the possibility of thought-transference from the living had been established.

There is a case recorded in *Phantasms of the Living* (vol. i., p. 365), in which Mrs. Menneer saw in a dream the body of her brother, Mr. Wellington, standing by her bedside, with his head lying on a coffin by his side. Mr. Wellington had actually been decapitated by the Chinese at about the time of the dream—the exact date of the dream cannot now be fixed.

To Mr. Gurney the interpretation of the dream on the hypothesis of thought-transference from the living presented some difficulties: it seemed necessary to suppose that Mr. Wellington had dramatised his own fate at the moment of death. But we have since learnt that the head was given up to Mr. Wellington's friends on the following day, and a telepathic message from their minds is thus suggested as a possible explanation.[1]

Several cases have been reported to us in which a dying man has seen the figure of a friend, of whose death he could not have been aware by ordinary means. In some of these cases the fact was

[1] See Mr. Myers's comments on the case, *Proceedings*, S. P. R., vol. viii., p. 208. See also, in this connection, Cases 39, 40, and 41, Chapter VI.

known to those around the sick-bed, and had been deliberately withheld from the patient. In the case which follows, however, the fact of the death of the person seen in the vision was not apparently known to any one in the neighbourhood of the percipient, and the hypothesis of thought-transference from the living is so far less plausible. It is possible that the approach of death may in itself tend, as suggested by Mr. Myers, to quicken and stimulate our psychical faculties.

No. 48. From Colonel ——[1]

Writing on the 1st March, 1885, Colonel —— explains that about sixteen years previously he had invited Miss Julia X., the daughter of his gunmaker, to stay in his house for a week in order that she might take part in some singing at the house of a neighbour, Mrs. Y. Miss X. gave great pleasure by her visit: she was shortly after married, and gave up the idea of coming out as a singer. Mrs. Y. apparently never saw her again. Some years later, on the 12th of February, 1874, Mrs. Y. lay dying, and Colonel —— had come to talk over some business matters with her. She was, he tells us, in thorough possession of her senses. "She changed the subject and said: 'Do you hear those voices singing?' I replied that I did not; and she said: 'I have heard them several times to-day, and I am sure they are the angels welcoming me to Heaven; but,' she added, 'it is strange, there is one voice amongst them I am sure I know, and cannot remember whose voice it is.' Suddenly she stopped and said, pointing straight over my head, 'Why there she is in the corner of the room; it is Julia X.; she is coming on; she is leaning over you; she has her hands up; she is praying; do look; she is going.' I turned but could see nothing. Mrs. Y. then said: 'She is

[1] *Proceedings*, S. P. R., vol. iii., p. 92.

gone.' All these things I imagined to be the phantasies of a dying person."

On the following day Mrs. Y. died. On the day after, the 14th, Colonel —— saw in the *Times* the notice of the death of Julia X. (Mrs. Webley). From Mr. Webley we learn that she died on the 2nd of February, 1874, and that the last hours of her life were spent in singing.

In the cases so far considered, which occurred within, at furthest, a few weeks after death, no information has been communicated beyond the fact of the death itself, and occasionally the circumstances and manner of the death, or the appearance of the deceased person at the time. But the popular conception of a ghost, a returning spirit, includes more than this. In traditional stories the spirit generally returns to communicate a definite message to the survivors. Sometimes the message consists simply in the fact of the survival of the soul after death; but frequently it is concerned with things left undone in his lifetime by the deceased. In comparatively few of the narratives collected by us do concrete messages of this kind play a part. That fact furnishes in itself, of course, strong proof of the good faith and scrupulousness of our informants. It is clear that they are dealing with matters of their own personal experience, and have not given rein to their imagination. It will be noticed, indeed, by any one who carefully compares a large number of these narratives, that, in the more recent cases at any rate, the *waking vision* is not often represented as giving a message of particular import. The apparition seen with the eyes open may

resemble the dead man, but the resemblance is to the figure familiar to the percipient in life. It is, in other words, open to us to suppose that the clothing and imagery are supplied by the percipient's own imagination. There is rarely any novel feature of costume; rarely any communication to other senses than that of sight. It is, generally speaking, in the narratives which deal with remoter experiences that the more sensational details are apt to appear. In short, statements written down many years after the event to which they relate have a tendency to conform more closely to the traditional type. But though in the best attested accounts of waking hallucinations we can find few parallels to the repentant monk, the troubled miser, or the conscientious debtor of the popular imagination, we do in dreams find many cases where purpose and knowledge are shown which apparently point to the agency of the deceased. That such indications practically occur only in dreams is not in itself a suspicious circumstance. Dreams no doubt, as already pointed out, have less ostensive value than waking visions, because of the greater scope for chance coincidence. But, on the other hand, we have good reason to believe that telepathic communication of all kinds is most readily established when, as in sleep or trance, the faculties which deal with the life of relation are in abeyance. We have no reason therefore for distrusting the accuracy of a dream story, on the sole ground that it imports sensational features of the kind referred to.

I propose to cite a few narratives in which information purporting to proceed from a deceased person, and beyond the conscious knowledge of the recipient, was communicated in dream or some allied state. It is of course impossible in any case of this kind to be absolutely satisfied that the information was not already latent in the dreamer's mind. We know of many cases in which impressions, after remaining latent through a period of weeks or even years, have ultimately emerged in sleep, crystal vision, or other form of automatism. But the reader will probably agree that in some of the narratives quoted such an explanation is at least improbable; and that the accumulation of a large number of similar instances would furnish an argument of some weight for the survival of human personality after the death of the body. The hypothesis of the emergence of latent memory can no doubt be applied in the following case.

No. 49. From Professor Dolbear [1]

Mr. Dolbear, Professor of Physics at Tufts College, Mass., dreamt one night that he saw and spoke to a deceased acquaintance, Mr. Farmer, an electrician. In his dream Professor Dolbear asked for a test of identity, and Farmer held out his left hand, with the fingers bent in a very extraordinary way. On his relating the dream to Miss Farmer, Professor Dolbear learnt that this particular disposition of the fingers was a common trick on the part of the dead man. Professor Dolbear had, however, no recollection of ever seeing such a trick, and as his acquaintance with Mr. Farmer was purely on a business footing, he thinks it unlikely that he had actually seen it.

[1] *Journal*, S. P. R., October, 1897.

In the following case the hypothesis of the revival in dream of a latent impression involves perhaps a higher degree of improbability.

Miss Whiting, the narrator, had been an intimate friend of Kate Field, the well-known American journalist, and was in 1899 bringing out a life of her deceased friend. Miss Whiting believes that she has frequently held communication with the spirit of Kate Field.

No. 50. From Miss Lilian Whiting[1]

8th August, 1899.

Between 2 and 3 A.M., August 4th, Kate wakened me, speaking to me excitedly about a "letter of Lowell's" to her. All was confused and rapid, but at last I caught clearly: "In *K. F.'s W.*—in my *Washington*, Lilian; look in my *Washington*." Then I vaguely recalled that Lowell had written her a letter *in re* International Copyright, which she had published in her journal, and which I had already included in her biography, so I replied to her: "Yes, darling, I know—the letter is in the book. It 's all right."

Again an excited and rapid speaking, of which I only caught here and there a word, but—partly from impression, and almost impulsion—I rose, went out into my parlour, turned on the electric light, and took the five bound volumes of her *K. F.'s W.* down from my shelves. Half automatically I seemed to be guided (for I had totally forgotten its existence) to a letter that Lowell wrote to her in 1879, when he was American Minister to Spain—writing from Madrid, and she in London—and which, *on his death*, she had published in her *Washington*.

[Miss Whiting explains that the letter was of considerable literary interest, and then adds:] As the original letter was not among Miss Field's MSS., and as I had totally forgotten it (I don't, even now, recall seeing it, though I *must have* at the

[1] *Journal*, S. P. R., December, 1899.

time), this very important letter would have been left out of her biography, had she not thus called me and led me to it. There was barely time to get [it] in before the first casting of the proofs. I went with it myself out to the University Press the next morning to see where I could now introduce it in the part of proofs not yet cast—as I couldn't even delay for the mail. Miss Field's waking me,—her urgent and excited and forcible manner and words,—were just as real to me as would have been [those] of some friend in this world coming to my bedside in the night. L. W.

On a first reading Miss Whiting's interpretation of this dramatic incident would appear to be the most probable. But a case which offers many points of similarity has been put on record by Dr. Hilprecht, Professor of Assyrian at the University of Pennsylvania. After puzzling over the inscription on two fragments of agate from the temple of Bel, at Nippur, he fell asleep and dreamt that the priest of Bel appeared to him, led him into the treasure chamber of the temple, and then gave him the history of the two fragments and an interpretation of the inscription. This interpretation, the next day he found to be correct. Here there can be little doubt that the revelation made in the dream was but the final result of the dreamer's own processes of unconscious cerebration, and the priestly visitant only a puppet in the drama.[1]

It is more difficult in the next case to apply the hypothesis of latent knowledge, though Professor Alexander, who procured the narrative for us, writes

[1] Quoted in *Proceedings*, S. P. R., vol. xii., p. 11.

that the incident is "of a type rather frequent among Brazilian Catholics."

No. 51. From Donna Nery[1]

Barbacena, March 26th, 1895.

In January, 1894, the decease occurred of Félicité G., a young Belgian lady, who was married to a nephew of mine. After the death of his wife, the latter came to our house at Barbacena, bringing with him much luggage belonging to the deceased, and he stayed here with his children for some days.

Some two months afterwards—I have no means of ascertaining the exact date—I went to a *soirée* and returned home about 2 o'clock in the morning, having passed some pleasant hours in which all thoughts of sadness were temporarily swept from my memory. On that very night, however, I had a vivid dream of Félicité. It seemed to me that she entered the room where I really lay asleep, and, sitting down on the bedside, asked me, as a favour, to look into an old tin box under the staircase for a certain wax candle, which had been already lighted, and which she had promised to Our Lady. On my consenting to do so, she took leave of me, saying, "*Até o outro mundo* (Till the other world)."[2] I awoke from the dream much impressed. It was still dark, but I could no longer sleep.

On that day, the others having gone out, I called a servant and ordered her to search in the tin box, which had, in fact, been placed under the staircase, and which had belonged to Félicité. No one had opened the box before. It was full of old clothes and cuttings, among which it was by no means probable that we should find a wax candle. The servant turned over these clothes, at first without result, and I was already beginning to think that my dream was of no importance, when, on straightening out the clothes so that the box might be closed, I saw the end of a candle, which I at once ordered

[1] *Journal*, S. P. R., January, 1896.

[2] "Till soon," "Till to-morrow," "Till the return," etc., are the expressions generally used in Brazilian leave-taking.—A. A.

her to take out. It was of wax—of the kind used for promises [to saints]—and, what was a still more singular coincidence, it had already been lighted.

We delivered the candle to Monsenhor José Augusto, of Barbacena, in performance of my niece's pious vow thus curiously revealed in a dream.

(Signed) GUILHERMINA NERY.

Senhor Nery writes:

BARBACENA, March 26th, 1895.

I recollect that, on the occasion, my wife told me of the dream, much impressed by it. It is exactly what is written.

(Signed) DOMINGOS NERY.

The next case comes to us from America. The facts were carefully investigated within a few weeks of the occurrence by Dr. Hodgson, and there seems no ground for doubting that the dream actually occurred as stated. The following account extracted from a local newspaper was written by a member of the staff who happened to enter the coroner's office a few minutes after the son of the dead man, who had returned to Dubuque on the strength of his sister's dream, had searched the clothes, and found the money. The reporter heard the facts both from the son and from the coroner.

No. 52. From "THE HERALD," DUBUQUE, IOWA [1]

February 11th, 1891.

It will be remembered that on February 2nd, Michael Conley, a farmer living near Ionia, Chickasaw County, was found dead in an outhouse at the Jefferson house. He was carried to Coroner Hoffmann's morgue, where, after the inquest, his body was prepared for shipment to his late home. The old

[1] *Proceedings*, S. P. R., vol. viii., pp. 200, 201.

clothes which he wore were covered with filth from the place where he was found and they were thrown outside the morgue on the ground.

His son came from Ionia and took the corpse home. When he reached there and one of the daughters was told that her father was dead, she fell into a swoon, in which she remained for several hours. When at last she was brought from the swoon, she said, "Where are father's old clothes? He has just appeared to me dressed in a white shirt, black clothes, and felt [misreported for *satin*] slippers, and told me that after leaving home he sewed a large roll of bills inside his grey shirt with a piece of my red dress and the money is still there." In a short time she fell into another swoon and when out of it demanded that somebody go to Dubuque and get the clothes. She was deathly sick, and is so yet.

The entire family considered it only a hallucination, but the physician advised them to get the clothes, as it might set her mind at rest. The son telephoned Coroner Hoffmann asking if the clothes were still in his possession. He looked and found them in the backyard, although he had supposed they were thrown in the vault as he had intended. He answered that he still had them, and on being told that the son would come to get them, they were wrapped in a bundle.

The young man arrived last Monday afternoon and told Coroner Hoffmann what his sister had said. Mr. Hoffmann admitted that the lady had described the identical burial garb in which her father was clad, even to the slippers, although she never saw him after death, and none of the family had seen more than his face through the coffin lid. Curiosity being fully aroused, they took the grey shirt from the bundle and within the bosom found a large roll of bills sewed with a piece of red cloth. The young man said his sister had a red dress exactly like it. The stitches were large and irregular, and looked to be those of a man. The son wrapped up the garments and took them home with him yesterday morning, filled with wonder at the supernatural revelation made to his sister, who is at present lingering between life and death.

The coroner and the other persons concerned have confirmed the accuracy of the newspaper account. The percipient, though unwilling to write out her version of the incident, has related the dream in similar terms to Mr. Amos Crum, the pastor of a neighbouring church.

There is another class of evidence for *post-mortem* agency which may briefly be referred to here. Several cases have been investigated by us in which the body of a drowned man has, after fruitless search by ordinary means, been at length discovered through a dream. A typical case of the kind occurred at New Lambton (County Durham) in January, 1902. A police constable in the neighbourhood had disappeared on the night of the 4th January. For the next four days the neighbourhood was thoroughly searched, some thirty or forty constables assisting. On the 8th January a friend of the missing constable dreamt that he saw the body in a particular spot in a stream running through a wood. The next day, after mentioning his dream to several persons, he went to the spot indicated, thrust a long pole into the water, and raised the body.[1]

Of the facts there can be no question. But the dreamer had actually taken part in the search along the banks of this very stream; and we cannot, therefore, exclude the possibility that some indication had been perceived subconsciously which first received full recognition in the dream. However, the incident, as said, is by no means an isolated one,

[1] *Journal*, S. P. R., November, 1902.

and the hypothesis of subconscious perception becomes less plausible the more numerous the instances which it is invoked to cover. In the next chapter we shall have to consider a case in which the skeleton of a man murdered forty years previously was discovered through a persistent dream.

So far we have passed in review examples of messages purporting to emanate from the dead, in which the proof of such origin consists in the information, whether as to the death itself, or as to some other fact presumably known only to the deceased, which was conveyed by the message. We have now to consider an important class of cases in which the apparition is seen by two or more persons simultaneously—"collective" apparitions, as they are conveniently termed.[1]

The fact that the phantasm is seen by more than one person at the same moment inevitably suggests that the apparition is in some sense objective; *i. e.*, that it has a cause external to the minds of all the percipients. But even when two or three witnesses are prepared to attest the reality of the vision, it would be difficult now to maintain the older view that the thing seen is objective in the sense of being material, or even quasi-material, astral, metetherial, or whatever other name may be found for the hypothetical substance. Whatever the cause of the apparition, it will probably be recognised that it is

[1] For the sake of convenience the case of collective visual hallucinations only is considered in the text. For examples of collective *auditory* hallucinations, see the Census Report (*Proceedings*, S. P. R., vol. x., pp. 315-17).

in substance a hallucination—the stuff of which dreams are made—and has no more materiality, or quasi-materiality, than they.

Collective hallucinations, or what purport to be such, though far less common than solitary hallucinations, are still fairly numerous. In the Census 95 visual cases were reported at first hand, as compared with 992 cases of unshared hallucinations. The following table shows the nature of the collective hallucinations reported in the Census.

COLLECTIVE VISUAL HALLUCINATIONS, DIVIDED ACCORDING TO CONDITIONS OF PERCEPTION[1]

	Percipients in bed.	Percipients up and indoors.	Seen out of doors.	Totals
Realistic human apparitions of living persons	3	10	14	27
" " dead persons	—	6	2	8
" " unrecognised	2	13	17	32
Incompletely developed apparitions.....	4	4	4	12
Visions.....	—	—	—	—
Angels and religious apparitions or visions	—	—	—	—
Apparitions, grotesque, horrible, or monstrous	1	—	2	3
" of animals.....	—	3	1	4
" of definite inanimate objects	—	1	—	1
" of lights.....	1	—	1	2
" of indefinite objects.....	—	5	1	6
Totals.....	11	42	42	95

[1] *Proceedings*, S. P. R., vol. x., p. 414.

From this total, however, of 95 cases large deductions should be made. In only 43 of the cases have we received testimony from a second percipient; and it is practically certain that in some cases the narrator's memory is at fault in assuming that his experience was shared. Further, the large proportion of collective hallucinations seen out of doors (33 out of 67 apparitions of the human form) suggests that in many cases the hallucinatory character of the experience may have been too hastily assumed. The figure may have been a real person.

Again, in some cases it seems possible that the experience may have been of the nature of an illusion rather than a hallucination—a misinterpretation of some actual sense impression occurring to both percipients simultaneously. Or again, the similarity of the impressions reported by different percipients may have been due to verbal suggestion. This explanation is especially applicable when the vision, as in one of the cases cited below, lasted for several minutes.

But when ample allowance has been made on these accounts, enough well evidenced cases remain, both in the Census and outside of it, to compel us to search for some other explanation than those indicated above. If the existence, then, of a class of collectively perceived hallucinations is admitted, there are, apart from verbal suggestion, two conceivable explanations: (1) The apparition may be due to a cause external to the minds of all the percipients, or (2) it may originate in the mind

of one of those present, and be transferred telepathically to the rest. In the latter case, the vision may have no objective significance, and may testify to no reality. It is obvious that, in the case of apparitions representing the dead, we have no criterion which will enable us to decide between these alternative explanations. At most, we can determine upon which side the balance of probability lies, by considering the whole of the evidence.

In the first place, then, we may note that collective visions are occasionally concerned with inanimate objects—*e.g.*, a chair, or a skeleton,—or with animals. We have several cases in which apparitions of animals, a cat, or a bull, have been seen by two witnesses simultaneously. We have also many cases of lights seen collectively. We have an interesting experimental case in which two young ladies saw the same imaginary scene in a crystal—pyramids and a train of camels.[1]

Further, it will be seen from the Census table that nearly half the human apparitions seen represented persons unknown to the percipients. Again, collective apparitions of the living, which constitute more than three fourths of the recognised apparitions shown in the table, are not as a rule seen under circumstances such as to suggest the agency of the person represented. A typical case is quoted in the Census Report.[2] Two sisters, playing the harmonium in an empty church, saw the

[1] *Journal*, S. P. R., November, 1901, p. 134.

[2] *Proceedings*, vol. x., p. 306.

figure of a third sister walk up the church and mysteriously disappear. The third sister had accompanied them to the Rectory, and, as appeared subsequently, had spent most of the afternoon in the library. She had, indeed, gone to the church gate with the intention of entering, but had turned back. It would seem extravagant to suppose that her easily abandoned intention had wrought such an impression upon the minds of her sisters as to cause a hallucinatory apparition of herself. And in many cases of collective hallucinations there is no apparent connection of any kind between the percipients' experience, and the condition of the living person whose phantasmal likeness is seen.

All these considerations point to the conclusion that, in the great majority of cases, at any rate, the collectively seen apparition has no point of interest beyond its collectivity; that it is, in fact, no more significant than the ordinary casual hallucination, from which it is distinguished merely by the fact that, owing to favouring circumstances, it is telepathically transferred to another mind. But obviously in the present state of our knowledge such a conclusion can only be tentative, and the reader must judge for himself how far the cases to be cited justify provisionally the assumption of *post-mortem* agency.

The following account, which was procured for us by the Rev. A. Holborn, will serve to illustrate the type. The ladies, who are well-known to Mr. Holborn, withhold their names, at the request of

the surviving relatives of the little boy. The statement is signed by both ladies.

No. 53[1]

A little friend of ours, H. G., had been ill a long time. His mother, who was my greatest friend, had nursed her boy with infinite care, and during her short last illness was full of solicitude for him.

After her death he seemed to become stronger for a time, but again grew very ill, and needed the most constant care, his eldest sister watching over him as the mother had done. As I was on the most intimate terms with the family, I saw a great deal of the invalid.

On Sunday evening, June 28th, 1903, about nine o'clock, I and the sister were standing at the foot of the bed, watching the sick one, who was unconscious, when suddenly I saw the mother distinctly. She was in her ordinary dress as when with us, nothing supernatural in her appearance. She was bending over her boy with a look of infinite love and longing and did not seem to notice us. After a minute or two she quietly and suddenly *was not there.* I was so struck that I turned to speak to the sister, but she seemed so engrossed that I did not think it wise to say anything.

The little patient grew gradually worse, until on Tuesday evening, June 30th, I was summoned to go at once. When I arrived at the house he had passed away. After rendering the last offices of love to the dear little body, the sister and I again stood, as on the Sunday, when I said, "M——, I had a strange experience on Sunday evening here." She quickly replied, "Yes, mother was here; I saw her." The young girl is not given to fancies at all, and must have been impressed as I was.

As said, the interpretation of the vision is ambiguous. In the remarkable case of Frances

[1] *Journal*, S. P. R., February, 1904, p. 187.

Reddell, the vision seen by the watcher at the death-bed was that of a living woman, the patient's mother. Frances Reddell, a servant of Mrs. Pole Carew, when nursing a fellow-servant, who was dying of typhoid fever, heard a bell ring, and then "heard the door open, and looking round, saw a very stout old woman walk in. She was dressed in a nightgown and red flannel petticoat, and carried an old-fashioned brass candlestick in her hand. The petticoat had a hole rubbed in it." The vision then disappeared. The sick girl died a few hours later, and when the mother attended the funeral, Frances Reddell and Mrs. Pole Carew, to whom she had told the story, recognised in her the original of the apparition.[1]

It is difficult to explain this case except on the supposition that the dying girl's dream was somehow impressed upon the mind of the watcher by the bedside; and the possibility of a similar explanation cannot, of course, be precluded when the figure seen is that of the dead.

In the following narrative several figures are reported to have been seen, some recognised as those of the dead or the living, some unrecognised by any of those present. The case was sent to us by Mrs. H. J. Wilson, an Associate of the Society, of 12 Cheyne Court, Chelsea, London, S. W., who is intimately acquainted with all the witnesses. We are requested to print their initials only, but the full names have been given to us. Mrs. C., the

[1] See my *Apparitions and Thought Transference*, p. 306.

medium mentioned, is not a professional medium, but a friend of the other ladies.

The incident took place in May, 1904, and the first account we give is copied from a letter written shortly afterwards by Mrs. A. to Mrs. Wilson, as follows :

No. 54. From Mrs. A.[1]

It was in my bedroom at B——, Switzerland. Mrs. C—— was the medium. She was seated facing the long mirror in my wardrobe, and we, that is C. [Mrs. P., sister of Mrs. A.], A. [the daughter of Mrs. A.], Mrs. H., and myself, were seated just behind her, also facing the mirror. Mrs. C—— was not in trance. In a very short time we saw my father's face form over Mrs. C.'s face (in the mirror), and then S.'s face, two or three times following. She was smiling and looking hard at us, her two sisters. Then she faded away, and a long corridor came, with a large hall or room at the end of it, brilliantly lighted up. Many figures were walking about, but my figure and E.'s [Mrs. A.'s son] were most prominent—there was no mistaking them. I recognised my own figure walking about, and leaning forward to talk. That was all, as it was rather late, and time to go to bed.

S., the sister of Mrs. A. and Mrs. P., had died in March, 1904; E., the son of Mrs. A., was living at the time, and in London.

The account of the other sister, Mrs. P., was dictated by her to Mrs. Wilson, and sent to us enclosed in a letter from Mrs. Wilson, dated October 3rd, 1904. It is as follows :

It was at B——, about May 1st, 1904, at 8.30 P.M. The electric light was full on all the time, shaded only by a piece of silver tissue paper. There were present Mrs. C—— (the

[1] *Journal*, S. P. R., February, 1905, pp. 17–19.

medium), Mrs. A——, A., Mrs. H——, and myself. Mrs. C. sat in front of a mirror, Mrs. A. and I sat just behind her, and the other two to right and left of us respectively. Behind us was the bedroom wall, and a washing stand against that, with a small mirror over it. The medium was not entranced. I saw S——'s face form on Mrs. C——'s face, followed by that of old Mrs. P——. Then came a full-length figure of my father in the mirror, in his robes, very like the portrait. He looked benignant and *rested*, with lines of face much smoothed away. This faded, and then all perceived a long passage in the mirror, at a guess, about 25 feet long, with bay window at the end, and sunshine streaming through. There was a window seat, and two figures standing by it, unrecognisable. Then a third figure appeared, also unrecognisable. They seemed to look out of window and converse. Medium then became tired.

The next account, written in October, 1904, is from Miss A., and is as follows:

Mother, Mrs. C——, Aunt C—— [Mrs. P.], another lady, and myself, were all seated in front of a large pier glass, Mrs. C—— (the medium) being slightly nearer the glass (say 3 inches) than the rest of us. The gas was turned down to about half its strength. Presently, after sitting ten minutes or so, we saw what appeared to be a white mist rising up in front of the medium's reflection, and it finally resolved into a good and distinct likeness of Grandad. When we recognised it the figure smiled and nodded its head. Then a likeness of Aunt S—— appeared, not so distinct, but perfectly easy of recognition, after which a lady appeared unknown to four of us, but recognised by the lady who was sitting with us.

For a time we saw nothing but mist again, but it gradually cleared, and a long corridor became visible with a door at the further end evidently opened inwards, and screened on the side nearest us by looped curtains, through which we saw into a brilliantly lighted room, whether bright sunlight or artificial

light we could not tell. Figures too distant to be recognised came and went in the room, and once a girl in what appeared to be bridal dress stood just behind the opening of the curtain. Then the doors appeared to be shut for a time, but presently opened, and two figures pushed aside the curtains and came down the corridor towards us talking. We recognised them as Mother and E——. Then the picture faded again, and we closed the sitting. This is to the best of my recollection, but as I took no notes at the time, I may easily have forgotten details.

In answer to further questions Miss A. writes:

October 14th, 1904.

The likenesses were formed on Mrs. C——'s image in the glass, as it were, transforming her features into those of the persons represented. Her own face, as distinct from the image, was unchanged, except that the eyes were closed, while the faces in the glass all had their eyes open. This is an interesting point, I think.

The fourth witness, Mrs. H., dictated her account to Mrs. Wilson in the early part of November, 1904, as follows:

I first saw the head and shoulders of an old clergyman with grey hair—no beard; he wore the old-fashioned "Geneva bands" that the clergy used to wear. I did not recognise him, but heard Mrs. P—— and Mrs. A—— say it was their father. I did not see him on the medium's face, but in a corner of the mirror, apart from the medium. I also heard Mrs. P—— and Mrs. A—— say that they saw their sister, but I did not see her. After this we saw a ball-room in the mirror, very brightly lighted, with people walking about in it. I did not recognise any of them. I ought to have said that at first I saw a curtain across the room, and it was when it was withdrawn that I saw the people walking about.

The room we were sitting in was lighted by a candle.

This curious case is unique in our collection. But it is clearly analogous to a crystal vision; and we have, as already indicated, one or two cases of collective vision in a crystal. All the accounts are fairly recent, and they present, it will be seen, a general agreement. There are indeed certain discrepancies, especially as to the lighting of the room, which is diversely described as electric light, gas, and a candle. There are differences too in the description of the persons seen, but these may have been due to differences in the details of the visions actually seen by the percipients. It is stated that Mrs. C., the medium, kept her eyes closed and did not speak at all throughout the sitting. But the other ladies described to each other what they were seeing, and it is probable that the several visions may have been by this means brought into closer conformity. It is difficult to suppose, however, that the whole of the scenes described originated in the verbal suggestion of one of those present. It is to be regretted that the accounts do not give more precise details as to the nature and relative position of the light; it seems possible that shadows or reflections on the surface of the mirror may have formed a basis upon which the complex scenes described could be built up, under the joint influence of verbal and telepathic suggestion.

In the next case, again, we cannot altogether exclude the influence of verbal suggestion; since the apparition remained visible for an appreciable

length of time; and the percipients discussed as they approached it the nature of the appearance. Moreover, though the accounts here given are stated to have been written independently, it is probable that in the interval of some years which elapsed before the incident was committed to writing the details were fully discussed by the percipients, and the remarkable uniformity in their descriptions should not therefore be given undue weight.

It is a point of interest in the case that the scene of the apparition was the park attached to an Elizabethan Manor House, in which several "ghosts" had been seen in a period covering some years. The figure seen in the present case, however, bore no resemblance to any of the ghostly figures seen in the house itself. One of the percipients, Miss Eglantine Russell, had on several occasions seen hallucinatory figures (a dog and a human form) in the house.

No. 55. From Miss Eglantine Russell[1]

August, 1904.

On December 22nd, 1897, I was walking through the fields near the house with my sisters, Edith and Rose (both older than myself). It was quite a sunny afternoon, between three and four o'clock. Resting at a fence we stopped to talk, myself sitting on the top railing, the others standing below. Looking across the corner of the field by an oak tree in the fence, I remember seeing an object, but listening to the others talking, I didn't take much notice whether it was man, horse,

[1] *Journal*, S. P. R., April, 1907, pp. 62, 63. All the names are assumed, as it is not thought desirable that the locality should be identified.

or cow. Presently Rose, looking up, said, "There 's one of the boys," looking across in the same direction. "Yes," I replied, "I thought I saw them." "No, it is n't," Rose continued; "it 's a man. Who is it, I wonder? Who can be wandering about up here? We 'd better go and see." We started for the other hedge, which was, I should think, about 50 yards distant. We had a fox terrier with us; he growled, and his ruff stood up, and he refused to come. I cannot now remember whether my sister Edith walked across with us, or, being nervous, stayed by the fence. My *impression* is she came, but a trifle behind Rose and myself. Walking closer, I saw that it was a man, hanging apparently from an oak tree in front of some railings over a ditch. He was dressed in brown rather brighter than the colour of brown holland; he did not seem to have a regular coat, but more of a loose blouse. One thing I most distinctly recall is his heavy clumsy boots. His face we could not see; there was something white over it. The head hung forward, and the arms drooped forward too. Coming within about 15 yards I saw the shadow of the railings through him, one bar across the shoulders, one bar about his waist, and one almost at his knees, quite distinct, but faint. I have a remembrance of a big, very black shadow in the background. At about 15 yards the whole thing disappeared absolutely. We went to the railing and looked over a clear field beyond, which would give no possible cover to any one trying to hide. Walking back to where we had first seen it we saw nothing but an oak tree by railings in a fence. While I saw it my only feeling, I remember, was intense curiosity to see what it was,—one seemed impelled to go forward; afterwards, sickening terror.

This is some years ago, but writing brings it all back to me. There may be some details I have forgotten; but this is the account as it stands clearly in my mind.

Miss Edith Russell (now Mrs. Shaw) writes:

I am writing down exactly what I saw, in conjunction with my two sisters.

It was on Dec. 23rd, 1897 (?). We were walking across some fields to meet my brothers who were out shooting with a neighbour. We stopped to wait for them, and sat on a fence half way across a field about 80 or 90 yards wide. My youngest sister suddenly remarked that there was a man looking over the fence at the far end of the field. I made some answer as to its probably being one of the boys. Presently my other sister said, "There is a man there," or words to that effect, and I looked up, and distinctly saw what looked like a man leaning over the fence. We then said we would find out what it was, and all three walked in a row towards the figure. When within about 20 yards, my youngest sister said, "Look at his legs!" I remarked to my other sister, "What is it? I don't like it." We walked on, after having said we would report to each other what we saw, as we went. This is what we all three saw: a man's figure hanging from a branch of an oak tree, his arms and legs dangling apparently helplessly, and his head hung forward, but it was covered with something white. We could see the railings which ran behind the oak tree through the figure. When we got within 10 yards, my sister said, "Why, it 's gone." We stopped and looked, and there was nothing to be seen but the oak tree and fence. It was a very bright sunny afternoon; there was a little snow on the ground.

One thing struck us as odd, for *between* the sun and the oak tree was a great black shadow, which we could not account for, as in the ordinary course of events the shadow would be on the opposite side of the tree to where the sun was.

This is absolutely true, and I have put it down just as I remember it.

The mother of the two ladies, in enclosing the above accounts, stated that they were written independently of each other. She adds that the third daughter is unwilling to write down her version; but Mrs. —— furnishes her own recollection of what she heard from this daughter at the time.

Her account corresponds with those given above. Mrs. —— adds that there is a vague legend that some one was murdered somewhere near. There is nothing, however, to throw any light upon the origin of the curious vision. It appears, however, from all three accounts that the first person to see the apparition was Miss Eglantine, the only one of the sisters who appears to have seen any of the ghostly figures in the house. On the hypothesis that the vision was a hallucination self-engendered in the mind of one of the percipients, we may assume, therefore, that it originated with Miss Eglantine.

CHAPTER XI

HAUNTED HOUSES

IN the last chapter we have dealt with messages from the dead of a personal character. The dream or vision has represented some one known when alive to the dreamer, and on familiar terms with him.[1] The cause of the percipience—the reason why the vision was seen by that particular person, and not by the man in the street—must in the cases hitherto considered be sought in the bonds of personal affection or relationship. And the same principle applies to the messages from the living dealt with in the earlier chapters of this book. The apparition of the dying man is seen as a rule by some one amongst his closest friends. But even in the case of apparitions of the dying we find some records, relatively few, but still too numerous to be summarily dismissed, in which the tie between the dying man and the percipient was not one of affection or blood, but apparently of locality. Several cases have been published in *Phantasms of the Living*, in which the figure of the dying man or woman was seen in the house

[1] Case No. 55 is, of course, an exception.

of an intimate friend, but seen by a comparative stranger.[1]

The following case amongst our more recent records will serve to illustrate the type:

No. 56. From Mrs. Benecke[2]

Mr. E. F. M. Benecke, an Exhibitioner of Balliol College, Oxford, was a good Alpine climber, and was at the time of his death collaborating in a Guide to the Swiss Alps. On the 16th July, 1895, he started with a friend, Mr. Cohen, at 3 o'clock A. M., from Ried for a short climb, and was never seen again. On the early afternoon of that day he was seen with a companion walking in his mother's garden in England. The percipient was Ellen Carter, now Mrs. Nichols, a daughter of Mrs. Benecke's laundress, who has written the following account at the request of Mrs. Benecke:

80 Mayes Road, Wood Green,
February 1st, 1897.

On Tuesday, July 16th, 1895, between the hours of 1 and 2 o'clock, I was doing some work in our bedroom and, looking out of the window, saw (as I thought) Mr. Edward Benecke with another young gentleman walking in the garden, and I went at once to mother and told her Mr. Edward had come home, and she said something must have prevented him from starting, as we knew he was going to Switzerland for his holiday for I was positive it was him I saw. When nurse came in on the Thursday, mother asked her if Mr. Edward had come home, and she said "No," and then we only said, "I thought I saw him," and we thought no more about it until the sad news reached us.

[1] See, *e. g.*, vol. i., pp. 524, 559; ii., pp. 40, 57, 61, 613.
[2] *Journal*, S. P. R., March, 1897.

In answer to some questions from Mrs. Benecke, Mrs. Nichols writes further:

80 Mayes Road, Wood Green, February 4th, 1897.

Madam,—I am glad to be able to answer the questions you have asked me. I did see another young man with Mr. Edward (as I thought it was) and the look was not momentary, for I was so surprised to see him that I watched him until he turned round the path; he was coming, as he sometimes did after luncheon, from the stable yard, along the path and turned towards the house. He was smiling and talking to his friend, and I particularly noticed his hair, which was wavy as it always was; he had nothing on his head. It was all that that made me feel so sure it was him, and I felt that I could not have been mistaken, knowing him so well. I cannot tell you anything [about] what the other young gentleman was like, as he was walking on the other side; also I hardly noticed him at all, being so surprised to see Mr. Edward. Mother was doubtful when I told her about it and said I must be mistaken; but I said I was sure I was not, and I was positive I had seen him, and I felt sure he had come home until nurse came in and said he had not been home, and then I thought how strange it was, and even then I could not think I was so mistaken, and often have I thought about it and feel even now that it was him I saw. Mother did say perhaps some accident had happened to his friend that he was to travel with and so was prevented from going; that was the only remark that was made about an accident.

If there is any other question I can answer, I shall be only too glad to do it for you. E. Nichols.

Mrs. Benecke gives the following particulars:

Teddy was in the habit of walking regularly in the garden, from 10 minutes past 12 till 1 o'clock, and again directly after luncheon, varying, according to the time this meal took us, from 1.30 or 1.45 till 2.30. He was so regular that I could tell the time by his footfall on the stairs. He never, except in the

very coldest weather—to please me—wore a hat or cap in the garden. The laundress often watched him walking up and down the garden paths, noticing the wind playing with his wavy hair. She even, at times, would get up on a stool to watch him, especially when Margaret was with him. She says they looked so bright and happy together. She has left us owing to her health, and her daughter married quite lately.

Mr. and Mrs. Benecke heard of the vision only after the news of the disappearance had reached England, on the 20th July.

Here it would seem that Mrs. Nichols saw the apparition because she happened to be on the spot to which the dying man's thoughts would inevitably turn. And the obvious interpretation of the incident — the interpretation which in fact obtained generally until the work of the Society for Psychical Research had familiarised another explanation — is that the spirit was actually present, and able to assume visible shape. How such a theory can be reconciled with the requirements of physical science we need not here pause to consider. The fact of the apparition occurring at that time and in that place was, it may be conceded, due in some sort to the agency of the man whom the apparition represented. But the apparition itself, the figure seen, we cannot doubt, was a dream projected from the brain of the seer. It would be impossible to treat this case as differing fundamentally from the great mass of cases reported to us. And as already shown, all analogy and the direct testimony of our own experiments point to these apparitions being essentially hallucinatory in their nature. The dreamlike

character of the vision in this particular case is further indicated by the occurrence of the second figure —a figure not even recognised by the seer. It seems probable that this second figure was a detail unconsciously added by the dream-consciousness to complete the verisimilitude of the picture, having in itself just as much or as little significance as the clothes which the apparition would appear to be wearing. As regards the explanation of the apparent influence of locality in facilitating telepathic impressions, it was suggested by Edmund Gurney that the occupation of the consciousness of agent and percipient by a common set of images, the one in present sensation, the other in memory, may form one of the predisposing conditions. But the consideration of other similar cases will perhaps throw some light on the point.

In the narrative which follows, the apparition seen represented a man who had been dead for some weeks.

No. 57. From Mrs. O'Donnell [1]

5th September, 1898.

[Mrs. O'Donnell explains that she had been residing in Brighton for some months during the winter of 1897–98, and that on the 22nd of March, 1898, she moved into furnished rooms, at Hove. She felt unwell the first evening in the new rooms, and was much disturbed at night by the sound of footsteps overhead. On complaining of this in the morning, she learnt that the room above was untenanted. The noises were repeated on the second night, and Mrs. O'Donnell felt too ill to get up.] The third night I had a large fire made up, and had a nightlight

[1] *Journal*, S. P. R., December, 1898, p. 327.

for company. About 11 P.M. my daughter went to her own room, wishing me a better night. Again the feeling of footsteps overhead—so much so that a perfect thrill of terror ran through me. I kept looking towards the fire for about an hour, and then thought I should turn towards the wall, where, terrible to relate, a horrible figure was standing by my bedside, one arm pointing to the adjoining room (then vacant), and the other pointing to me, quite close to my face. I gasped for breath, and covered my face with the clothes. After some time I reassured myself it was all imagination, and again turned to where I saw the horrid apparition. There it still was. I shrieked for terror, and called out, "Oh, my God, what is it?" and put out my left hand as if to feel if it was real, but imagine my horror, I was grasped by the icy hand of death. I remember no more. . . . The figure I saw was that of a rather small man, very dark, with very small hands, and covered in a tattered black suit from head to foot, more like a scarecrow than anything human. I slept in my daughter's room the next night, or rather occupied it, for I could not sleep. Towards the middle of the night the door opened (I had locked it). A small, dark, gentlemanly young man walked in, saying: "Oh, so you have the Scotchman's room!"—smiled pleasantly, and walked out of the room as he had come in. It was all so strange and dreadful. I told some friends next day. They were greatly startled, and said: "Can this be the house where the suicide happened a few weeks ago?" I at once called up the landlady. She denied it, saying it was next door. I was determined to find out, and on sending to the various tradespeople with whom we dealt, found it was the very house. The landlady then admitted it. The poor young man had slept in my bedroom, and the adjoining room (to which he had pointed) was his sitting-room, from the window of which he threw himself out. He was killed on the spot. The landlady's son waited on us at table. On investigating the matter with him and his mother afterwards, I found his description of the poor young fellow corresponded with the apparition I saw. He was four-and-twenty, rather small, and very dark. He had had bad

bronchitis, and became depressed. On the morning of his death he got up rather early, saying he felt better, and when his family left him he immediately opened his window, and threw himself out. He fell from a second-floor window into the area. His clothes were torn to pieces as he fell. On inquiry as to the Scotchman's room, the landlady told me a young Scotch gentleman (now in the service) had occupied our drawing-room and that bedroom which I changed to—and that he was a great friend of the poor young fellow who had ended his life in such a dreadful manner. The landlady also admitted she would not go up-stairs after dark alone, so she also must have considered the house haunted. I can certify all I have stated is strictly true.

We have ascertained from a local paper that the suicide took place as above described, at the end of January, 1898. The deceased was twenty-four years old.

Mrs. O'Donnell states that she had not heard of the suicide, and, indeed, the fact that she took the rooms is sufficient proof that she had not connected the tragedy with this particular house. It is perhaps conceivable that the vision may have been due to the revival of a forgotten memory of the newspaper report. In any single case of the kind it is no doubt possible, without violent straining of the probabilities, to find a normal explanation of the incident. But there are in our collection many cases of a similar type. Thus Mr. John Husbands, sleeping in a hotel at Madeira, awoke one night to see a young man in flannels standing at the side of his bed. He saw the features quite plainly. Later he learnt that a young man had died of consumption in that room about twelve months previously ;

and in a photograph of the deceased he recognised the features of the apparition.[1]

Again, a lady taking an afternoon nap in her bedroom on the day of her arrival at the Convent of St. Quay, Pontrieux, was awakened to see a venerable priest kneeling at the side of her bed. The figure rose, blessed her, and then vanished. On telling her story she learnt that no man was on the premises, but from her description the figure was recognised as that of the Bishop of St. Brieuc, who was in the habit of staying in this particular room when he visited the Convent. The funeral of the Bishop was taking place about sixteen miles off that same afternoon.[2]

When all allowance has been made for coincidence, the effect of unconscious suggestion, and for the almost inevitable embellishments, from which the narrators are not withheld in a case of this kind by any sense of personal sacredness in their experience, we find it difficult to resist the conclusion that these apparitions are in some fashion connected with the dead persons whom they purport to represent. Of the nature of that connection it is not easy to form even a plausible guess. As Mr. Gurney says of one case of the kind, the vision fre-

[1] *Proceedings*, S. P. R., vol. v., p. 416.

[2] *Proceedings*, S. P. R., vol. v., p. 460. For other cases of the type see Mr. Myers's list (*ibid.*, p. 473). And for some recent instances see Miss Atkins's narrative (*Journal*, April, 1894); the figure of a priest seen at Costessey Park by Lady Bedingfield (*Journal*, May, 1899); Miss Bedford's case (*Journal*, July, 1905); Mrs. Verrall's case (*Journal*, July, 1906). The figure seen in the last case was afterwards recognised from a portrait.

quently suggests "not so much anything associated with the popular idea of haunting, or any continuing local interest on the part of the deceased person, as the survival of a mere image, impressed we cannot guess how, on we cannot guess what, by that person's physical organism, and perceptible at times to those endowed with some cognate form of sensitiveness." [1]

Mr. Gurney suggests, it will be seen, the agency in some fashion of the dead. But we are not necessarily led to such an explanation. The old notion that a ghost was actually the spirit of the deceased person himself was inextricably bound up with the assumption that the figure seen had a material or objective reality. If we admit that the thing seen is but a dream figure, it becomes natural to endeavour to trace its source to an agency of whose operation we have independent proof—that is, thought transference from the living.

> May not this ancient room thou sitt'st in dwell
> In separate living souls for joy or pain?

Is it not conceivable, for instance, that the vision seen by Mrs. O'Donnell may have originated in the minds of the bereaved relatives? that the apparition of the Bishop of St. Brieuc may have been evoked by the grief of the sorrowing nuns? At any rate, while such a possibility exists, we are unable to regard these fugitive phantoms as sure indications of the presence of the dead.

[1] *Proceedings*, S. P. R., vol. v., p. 417.

More difficult to explain on any hypothesis are those cases in which dreams and other psychical disturbances are connected with the presence of human remains. One of the most remarkable cases of the kind is the following.

No. 58. From the "Banffshire Journal" [1]

30th January, 1872.

A most unusual and extraordinary occurrence has excited considerable interest in the district around Banff during the past few days, the chain of circumstances leading to which we are in a position to relate authoritatively.

William Moir is grieve at the farm of Upper Dallachy, in the Parish of Boyndie, about three and a half miles west of Banff and a mile west of the fishing village of Whitehills. Moir is an intelligent, steady, and modest man, 35 years of age, and married. Shortly after Whit Sunday last, he dreamed that, on a particular spot near the farm of Dallachy, he saw lying a dead body with blood upon the face. The dream was so vivid that every point connected with it was deeply impressed upon his memory. The spot on which he dreamed he saw the body lie was a slight mound on the sloping ground which bounds the farm and stretches to the seaside, and about sixteen feet from the high-water mark. For a time after the dream, Moir did not think much about it; but the idea of the dead man afterwards haunted him and he could not exclude it from his mind. By-and-bye the matter took so firm a hold upon his thoughts that never was he a moment unoccupied but the idea and the vision returned to him.

[In July, 1871, Moir assisted to carry the body of a drowned man from the sea across the very spot indicated in his dream. When a few yards from the spot, Moir's companion slipped, and the body fell to the ground. Moir at the time saw in this incident the fulfilment of his dream.]

Still, however, the vision of the dream came back upon the

[1] *Proceedings*, S. P. R., vol. vi., pp. 35, 36.

man. He could not go out walking or sit down at home in the evening without the recollection coming before his mind. Indeed, he began to think that his intellect was being affected, and he was conscious of becoming taciturn, morose, and absent. The disagreeable feeling continued to increase in intensity, and, during last week, it became positively painful.

[On Thursday afternoon he left the house with the intention of proceeding to a part of the farm remote from the sea.]

While Moir was on the way from the house, the idea of his dream occurred to him with such intense vividness that he turned and went back to the house. Saying nothing to any one in the house, he took a spade, and walked direct to the spot of which he had so distinct a recollection in connection with his dream, and removed a little of the turf from the surface. After he had done so, he put the spade down its full length into the ground and lifted up the earth. In the spadeful of earth, however, there was an entire human skull. The man was not at all affected by the appearance of the skull, the idea in his mind being that the turning-up of the skull was nothing more than what was to have been expected. He took other spadefuls of earth, and brought up the lower jaw with teeth, followed by the shoulder bones, and, digging farther along, dug up other bones of a human body as far as the thigh. Laying the bones out on the surface of the ground just in the position he had found them buried, he realised that he was digging up a skeleton.

Moir reported the matter to the police; an investigation was held; but nothing was elicited to throw light upon the mystery. The bones were thought by the doctors who examined them to have lain in the position where they were found for about forty years. There was a local tradition of the mysterious disappearance of a man at about that time. But the tradition does not seem to have been made the subject of precise enquiry;

and we have no grounds for identifying the skeleton.

Moir died in 1873—the year following the discovery. But he had himself corrected in proof the account above quoted from the *Banffshire Journal*. We have received corroborative testimony from his widow of the profound effect produced on his mind by the dream before the discovery of the skeleton. He is said further to have fallen into a state of intense religious depression shortly before his death.

It is difficult to suggest a plausible interpretation of this curious incident. If the bones were really forty years old, it is not easy to attribute the dream either to a guilty knowledge on Moir's part, or to telepathy from the person who had placed the skeleton where it was found. Again, in view of the situation of the skeleton, hyperæsthesia seems precluded. If we knew more of the case, and, in particular, if we had the opportunity of examining Moir, some further light would perhaps be thrown upon the mystery. But the case as it stands seems to point less ambiguously than most in our collection to the agency of the dead.

In another case of the kind the psychical disturbance, though very marked, was not referred at the time to any definite cause.

No. 59. From Mrs. Montague-Crackanthorpe [1]

Newbiggin Hall, Westmoreland, June 11th, 1883.

Herewith my "Northamptonshire nights"—and days, as

[1] *Proceedings*, S. P. R., vol. vi., pp. 42, 43.

accurately told as I can. But, beyond being very real to me, I am afraid they won't avail you much. For you see I heard nothing, saw nothing, neither did the maid. I *was* startled when my father told me of the rector's confession as to the "disagreeableness" of that end of the house—months afterwards—but what made most impression upon me was, that having battled through the night with my vague terrors successfully, I could *not* sit in that arm-chair, in the sunshine, next day, with the sound of the cook singing over her work close at hand.

In the summer of 1872, my father occupied a rectory house (Passenham) not far from Blisworth, in Northamptonshire, for a few weeks, and I went down to spend three days with him and my mother at Whitsuntide; my two children and their nurse being already there. The room given to me was over the dining-room; next door to it was the night nursery, in which my nurse and children slept, the rest of the inmates of the house being quite at the other end of a rather long passage. I hardly slept at all the first (Saturday) night, being possessed with the belief that some one was in my room whom I should shortly see. I heard nothing, and I saw nothing. The next morning, Sunday, I did not go to church, but betook myself to the dining-room with a book. It was, I remember, a perfectly lovely June morning. Before I had been a quarter of an hour in the room, and whilst wholly interested in the book, I was seized with a dread, of what I did not know; but in spite of the sunshine and the servants moving about the house, I found it more intolerable to sit there than it had been to remain in the room above the night before, and so, after a struggle, and feeling not a little ashamed, I left the room and went to the garden. Sunday night was a repetition of Saturday. I slept not at all, but remained in what I can only describe as a state of expectation till dawn, and very thankfully I left on the Monday afternoon. To my father and mother I said nothing of my two bad nights. The nurse and children remained behind for another week. I noticed that the nurse looked gloomy when I left her, and I put it down to her finding the

country dull, after London. When she returned she told me that she hoped she would never have to go to stay in that house again, for she had not been able to sleep there during the fortnight, being each night the prey of fears, for which she could not account in any way. My father left this rectory at the end of the summer; and some time afterwards he was talking of the place to me, and mentioned laughingly that before he entered it the rector had "thought it right to let him know that that end of the house in which I and my children were put up was said to be haunted, my room especially, and that several of his visitors—his sister in particular—had been much troubled by this room being apparently entered, and steps and movements heard in the dead of night. I do not like to let you come in," the rector added, "without telling you this, though my own belief in it is small." Within, I think, a year or eighteen months at most of my father's leaving, the house had to undergo considerable repair, and amongst others, a new floor had to be laid in the dining-room. On taking up the old boards four or five (I forget which) skeletons were found close under the boarding in a row, and also close to the hearthstone. Some of the skulls of these skeletons were very peculiar in form.

The Rev. G. M. Capell, writing from Passenham Rectory, October, 1889, says: "I found seven skeletons in my dining-room in 1874."

Two other cases of the kind are cited in the article from which the above account is taken. In one case a feeling of unaccountable horror was experienced in a room under part of the roof where the dried-up body of a baby was afterwards found. In another case, a governess and one of her girl pupils saw, independently, a ghostly figure in a room in Mannheim in the walls of which a skeleton had been discovered. The skeleton had been removed in the process of converting the room into

a schoolroom, and neither the governess nor the children had been told of the discovery. In another case the scene was a lodging-house in Trumpington Street, Cambridge. Loud and unaccountable noises had been heard in the house by the landlady, her servant, and at least two lodgers (undergraduates). The two former witnesses had also seen the apparition of a female figure. Some years afterwards three skulls, one that of a woman, were found just outside the window of the dining-room. [1]

The discovery of human remains in or near a dwelling-house in any civilised country is in itself so rare an event that the coincidence in these cases is the more striking. It is difficult to doubt that the psychical disturbances were in some way connected with these gruesome memorials of a past tragedy. But the only normal explanation which suggests itself is that of hyperæsthesia. Such an explanation, however, will scarcely apply even in Case 58, where the skeleton, buried in an open plain some distance from the house where Moir was haunted by his dream, was not more than forty years old. Of the skeletons found under the floor of Passenham Rectory, six were of a primitive type, and undoubtedly very old. Two of them were sent to the late M. de Quatrefages, at Paris. The seventh, according to the rector, Mr. Capell, was of comparatively recent origin; but it does not appear that it was sufficiently recent to give any support to the hypothesis of hyperæsthesia.

[2] *Journal*, S. P. R., March, 1901.

There are numerous cases in our collection in which mysterious noises have been heard, and ghostly figures seen by several witnesses in a particular house or locality. But though such "haunted" houses are fairly common, the phenomena are unfortunately inconclusive and extremely difficult of interpretation, partly from defect in the records, partly from the dubious nature of the things witnessed. It is seldom possible to connect the figures seen with the past history of the locality; it is not always possible to say that the figures seen by successive witnesses were really similar. But the fact, which seems to be well established, that in certain houses or places hallucinatory figures have been seen independently by several witnesses, is one which calls for explanation. The noises described as occurring in haunted houses have no doubt less significance, except in so far as they indicate a tendency to nervousness or hallucination on the part of the witnesses.

In the case which follows an apparition was seen in the same neighbourhood on several occasions, more than once by two persons simultaneously. We have, I think, no other case in our collection in which an apparition has been repeatedly seen on a country road in full daylight.

No. 60. From Miss M. W. Scott[1]

Lessudden House, St. Boswells,
February, 1893.

The incident I am about to relate occurred on the 7th of

[1] *Journal*, S. P. R., November, 1893.

May, 1892, between five and six in the afternoon. Having gone for a walk, I was returning homewards by a road in the vicinity of St. Boswells. The greater portion of the way is quite level, but at one part a short incline terminates with a sharp corner at the end. From the top of this eminence the whole road is conspicuous, with a hedge and bank on either side. Upon reaching the specified point, and finding time limited, I thought I would expedite matters by running, and had not gone many steps when I came to a sudden halt, for just a few yards beyond I perceived a tall man dressed in black, and who walked along at a moderate pace. Fancying he would think mine an extraordinary proceeding, I finally stopped altogether to permit of his getting on farther, while at the same time watching him turn the corner and pass on where his figure was still distinctly defined between the hedges referred to. He was gone in a second—there being no exit anywhere—without my having become aware of it. Greatly surprised, I then myself passed the same corner and spot where I had seen the man vanish a few seconds before, and here, a short space onward, I saw one of my sisters standing and looking about everywhere in a bewildered manner. When I came up to her I said: "Wherever has that man disappeared to?" and upon our comparing notes together it became evident that we had both experienced a similar sensation regarding the stranger, the only difference being that I had seen the apparition on in front, while she says he came facing her, and she, too, had noticed he vanished almost immediately.

But here the strangest part of it all is that we found that when the man became *invisible to her*, he *appeared to me between the part of the road where she and I were standing*. I may also here add that at the time we saw the apparition neither sister knew the other was so near.

Our experience then ended, until some weeks later, for though we thought the encounter a strange one, we did not trouble much about it. Towards the end of July, and at the same hour as before, another sister and myself were traversing the same spot, when not far distant I observed a dark

figure approaching, and exclaimed: "Oh, I do believe *that* is *our* man. I won't remove my eyes from him!" and neither we did till he seemed to *fade* away towards the bank on our right. Not waiting a moment to consider, each rushed frantically to either side of the road, but, of course, saw nothing We questioned some boys who were on the top of a hay-cart in the opposite field, and to whom the expanse of road was clearly visible, but they declared *no one* had passed that way. This time I again viewed the entire figure, while my sister only saw the head and to below the shoulders. The man was dressed entirely in black, consisting of a long coat, gaiters, and knee-breeches, and his legs were very thin. Round his throat was a wide white cravat, such as I have seen in old pictures. On his head was a low-crowned hat—the fashion I am unable to describe. His face, of which I only saw the profile, was exceedingly thin and deadly pale.

Miss Louisa Scott's account of the first incident is as follows:

As my sister has written a full and accurate account of our extraordinary experience in seeing a ghost in the broad daylight of a May afternoon, and as the road has already been described, I need only describe very briefly the appearance and movements of the apparition as I saw him. The date was the 7th of May, 1892, hour about a quarter before six, when, as I was walking homewards, I saw advancing towards me at an ordinary pace a tall man, dressed in black, whom I believed to be a clergyman. I removed my gaze but for a second, when great was my surprise when looking up again to find that he had gone from my sight. The hedge on either side of the road is very thick, with wide fields on either side so that the man could not possibly have sprung over it without my having seen him. I felt extremely mystified, and stood for several minutes, looking backwards and forwards into the fields and in all directions, when I was much surprised by seeing my sister turn the corner of a little incline higher up the

road and commence running down it, almost immediately coming to a sudden halt, and I saw her acting in the same way as I had done about five minutes before. Soon she walked onwards again, and finally turned the second sharp angle of the road and came hurriedly towards me, looking very much excited. (I had no idea that she was behind, nor did she know that I should be likely to be found in front of her.) Upon coming up to me she said, "Where on earth is that man who was standing only about ten feet from you?" And here, what makes it more striking is that I was facing the tall spectre, *yet could not see him when my sister did.* She was more fortunate than I, for she saw the entire dress of the man, while I only noticed his long black coat, the lower part of his body to me being invisible; while she had the satisfaction of seeing him entirely and also seeing him vanish, as she did not remove her eyes, as I did, from the first time of seeing him. This is all I have seen of the man, but to what I did see nothing has been added by the aid of imagination.

(Signed) Louisa Scott.

Miss M. W. Scott adds:

My other sister, who was with me when we saw the apparition for the last time, says that in the sketch I sent through Miss Guthrie it is narrated what she saw, and therefore she thinks her statement would be scarcely worth anything, her experience being so slight, as she only noticed the head and shoulders of the man, while I, as before, on the other occasion, perceived the entire dark figure.

We heard from Miss Scott a few months later that she had again seen the apparition in the same place as before. She describes it as follows:

June 14th, 1893.

I have again seen the ghost, and under the following circumstances. On Sunday, last, June 12th, at a few minutes before ten in the morning, having occasion to pass that way, I

perceived far in front a dark figure, who at that distance was indistinguishable as to whether it were man or woman, but believing the person to be the latter, and one I was acquainted with and likely to meet at that hour, I determined to hurry on and overtake her. I had not gone far, however, when I soon discovered it to be none other than the apparition we had looked for and failed to see for so many months. I did not then feel at all afraid, and, hoping to get a nearer inspection, boldly followed, running in close pursuit; but here the strangest part of it all is that though he was apparently walking slowly, I never could get any closer than within a few yards, for in but a moment he seemed *to float or skim away*. Presently he suddenly came to a standstill and I began to feel very much afraid, and stopped also. There he was—the tall spectre dressed as I have described before. He turned round and gazed at me with a vacant expression, and the same pallid, ghastly features. I can liken him to no one I have ever seen. While I stood, he still looked intently at me for a few seconds, then resumed his former position. Moving on a few steps he again stood and looked back for the second time, finally *fading from view* at his usual spot by the hedge to the right.

In a letter to a friend dated 28th June, 1893, Miss Scott, referring to the last appearance, writes:

I have had a splendid inspection of his appearance this time. He wears what is likely to be black silk stockings and shoe-buckles, short knee-breeches, and long black coat. The hat I cannot describe. The man is certainly dressed as a clergyman of the last century, and we have an old picture in the house for which he might have sat.

In August, 1898, Miss Scott saw the figure once more, but on this occasion the sister who was present with her did not see it. Miss Scott saw the figure again on the 24th July, and 16th August, 1900.

Miss Irvine, a lady resident in the neighbourhood, saw the figure at 4 P.M. one afternoon in the spring of 1894. Miss Scott tells us that the figure was also seen in 1892 or 1893 by two village girls; but we have not received a first-hand account of the appearance.

It should be noted, as pointed out by Miss Scott herself, that the dress of the figure on the two occasions last mentioned seems to have differed from the dress as seen by the original percipient. Miss Scott had seen a long coat and knee-breeches. Miss Irvine, in writing to us, describes the figure as wearing "a long cloak with cape and slouched hat, his hands in his coat pockets." No mention is made of knee-breeches. The village girls, according to Miss Scott, saw only a filmy looking sheet. We may look upon these discrepancies as some testimony to the accuracy of our informants. But in view of them we are hardly justified in speaking of the figures seen by the several witnesses as the same figure. It will be seen, from the descriptions given by Miss M. W. Scott and Miss Louisa Scott of the first appearance, that their visions were not simultaneous, and that the successive positions in which the figure was seen were inconsistent with its being a real figure. It should perhaps be added that there is a vague rumour of a murder having been committed in the neighbourhood, but that there is no authentic legend which throws any light upon the apparition.

Space will not permit of more than one other

example of this class of narrative, and I will choose, therefore, the case of which we have the fullest and most satisfactory record.

The chief percipient in the following history refrained from mentioning her early experiences to any member of her family, but wrote an account of them in contemporary letters to a friend. It is from these letters, which were happily preserved, that Miss "Morton's" account, written in 1892, is compiled. Some of the other percipients have given first-hand accounts of their experiences, but these, as will be seen, were written down some years after the events. Miss "Morton," who withholds her real name lest the house should be identified and its value impaired, is known personally to several members of the Society.

No. 61. From Miss "Morton"[1]

The house is a commonplace square building, dating from about 1860. Its first tenant was Mr. S., whose first wife died in the house (in August, year uncertain). Mr. S. married again, but his second marriage was unhappy. Both he and his wife took to drink. In order to prevent his second wife securing his first wife's jewels, he had a secret receptacle constructed for them under the floor of the morning-room or study. In that room he died in July, 1876, his widow dying in another part of England in September, 1878. With the exception of a brief tenancy of six months, terminated by death, the house appears to have remained unoccupied from the summer of 1876 until March, 1882, when it was taken by Captain Morton. Neither Captain Morton nor his wife, an invalid, ever saw anything in the house. The eldest sister, Mrs.

[1] *Proceedings*, S. P. R., vol. viii., pp. 311–332.

K., an occasional visitor, saw the figure on two or three occasions. Of the four other sisters, three at one time or another saw the ghost; and so did the younger brother. Miss Morton, the chief percipient and the recorder of the case, was aged about nineteen at the time. The first appearance was in June, 1882, and is thus described by her:

"I had gone up to my room, but was not yet in bed, when I heard some one at the door, and went to it, thinking it might be my mother. On opening the door, I saw no one; but on going a few steps along the passage, I saw the figure of a tall lady, dressed in black, standing at the head of the stairs. After a few moments she descended the stairs, and I followed for a short distance, feeling curious what it could be. I had only a small piece of candle and it suddenly burnt itself out; and being unable to see more, I went back to my room.

"The figure was that of a tall lady, dressed in black of a soft woollen material, judging from the slight sound in moving. The face was hidden in a handkerchief held in the right hand. This is all I noticed then; but on further occasions when I was able to observe her more closely, I saw the upper part of the left side of the forehead, and a little of the hair above. Her left hand was nearly hidden by her sleeve and a fold of her dress. As she held it down a portion of a widow's cuff was visible on both wrists, so that the whole impression was that of a lady in widow's weeds. There was no cap on the head, but a general effect of blackness suggests a bonnet, with long veil or a hood.

"During the next two years—from 1882 to 1884—I saw the figure about half a dozen times; at first at long intervals, and afterwards at shorter, but I only mentioned these appearances to one friend, who did not speak of them to any one.

"After the first time, I followed the figure several times downstairs into the drawing-room, where she remained a variable time, generally standing to the right hand side of the bow window. From the drawing-room she went along the passage towards the garden door, where she always disappeared.

"The first time I spoke to her was on the 29th January,

1884. 'I opened the drawing-room door softly and went in, standing just by it. She came in past me and walked to the sofa and stood still there, so I went up to her and asked her if I could help her. She moved, and I thought she was going to speak, but she only gave a slight gasp and moved towards the door. Just by the door I spoke to her again, but she seemed as if she were quite unable to speak. She walked into the hall, then by the side door she seemed to disappear as before.' (Quoted from a letter written on January 31st.) In May and June, 1884, I tried some experiments, fastening strings with marine glue across the stairs at different heights from the ground—of which I give a more detailed account later on.

"I also attempted to touch her, but she always eluded me. It was not that there was nothing there to touch, but that she always seemed to be *beyond* me, and if followed into a corner simply disappeared.

"During these two years the only *noises* I heard were those of slight pushes against my bedroom door, accompanied by footsteps; and if I looked out on hearing these sounds, I invariably saw the figure. 'Her footstep is very light, you can hardly hear it, except on the linoleum, and then only like a person walking softly with thin boots on.' (Letter of January 31st, 1884.) The appearances during the next two months—July and August, 1884—became much more frequent; indeed they were then at their maximum, from which time they seem gradually to have decreased, until now they seem to have ceased.

"Of these two months I have a short record in a set of journal letters written at the time to a friend. On July 21st I find the following account. "I went into the drawing-room, where my father and sisters were sitting, about 9 in the evening, and sat down on a couch close to the bow window. A few minutes after, as I sat reading, I saw the figure come in at the open door, cross the room, and take up a position close behind the couch where I was. I was astonished that no one else in the room saw her, as she was so very distinct to me. My youngest brother, who had before seen her, was not in the room. She

stood behind the couch for about half an hour, and then as usual walked to the door. I went after her, on the excuse of getting a book, and saw her pass along the hall, until she came to the garden door, where she disappeared. I spoke to her as she passed the foot of the stairs, but she did not answer, although as before she stopped and seemed as though *about* to speak.' On July 31st, some time after I had gone up to bed, my second sister E., who had remained downstairs talking in another sister's room, came to me saying that some one had passed her on the stairs. I tried then to persuade her that it was one of the servants, but next morning found it could not have been so, as none of them had been out of their rooms at that hour, and E.'s more detailed description tallied with what I had already seen."

During this period of two years the figure was also seen by at least three other inmates of the house, none of them knowing what the others had seen.

(1) Mrs. K. writes:

"29th March, 1892.

"While staying at——, in the autumn of 1883, I was coming down the stairs, about five in the afternoon, when I saw a tall figure in black cross the hall, push open the drawing-room door, and go in. At the time I thought she was a Sister of Mercy, from her long veil, the figure being entirely substantial, and like that of a real person, although on others making inquiries, no one had called.

"This, I may mention, was the year before I heard of any appearance being known of in the house."

Mrs. K. adds that she saw the figure on two other occasions.

(2) Mr. W. H. C. Morton writes:

"31st December, 1891.

"On or about December 18th, 1883, I was playing with a school-friend on the path in front of the drawing-room win-

dows, when on looking up at the drawing-room we both saw a tall figure in black, holding a handkerchief to her face with her right hand, seated at the writing-table in the window, and therefore in full light. We came in at once, but on going into the room found no one there, and on making inquiries found that no stranger had been in the house that afternoon. As far as I can remember, this was about 3.15 in the afternoon. At all events, it was full daylight at the time.

"Since then I have seen the figure twice.

". . . Previously to seeing the appearances (1) and (2) I had heard nothing about anything unusual in the house."

(3) The third appearance was to a housemaid, and is thus described by Miss Morton:

"In the autumn of 1883 it was seen by the housemaid about 10 P.M., she declaring that some one had got into the house, her description agreeing fairly with what I had seen; but, as on searching no one was found, her story received no credit."

On August 5th, 1884, Miss Morton told her father what she had seen, and thereafter the "ghost" became a familiar topic in the household. Subsequent appearances have thus somewhat less scientific interest, since it is impossible to exclude the effect of suggestion. One other illustration may however be quoted. The percipient in this case was a charwoman, Mrs. Twining, and the account is based upon notes taken by Mr. Myers at a personal interview on 29th December, 1889.

"About three years ago, one summer evening between eight and nine, when it was twilight, I had been at work at the Mortons' and was waiting for my pay. I stood at the top of the kitchen stairs, where there is a door into the garden behind the house. I saw a lady pass by, rather tall, in black

silk, with white collar and cuffs, a handkerchief in her hand, and a widow's fall. I had heard about the ghost, but it never struck me that this figure could be a ghost—it looked so like an ordinary person. I thought that some one had come to call and missed her way to the door. The family were at tea and I was merely waiting, so out of curiosity I followed the lady round the house. Just outside the morning-room window she suddenly disappeared. I was quite near her; it was quite impossible that a real person could have got away."

During the next few years the characteristic light footsteps were frequently heard by all the inmates of the house; also other sounds which gradually grew more loud and terrifying. The figure was also frequently seen, by Miss Morton herself, by her sisters, and by servants; sometimes in the garden or orchard, more frequently in the house; sometimes in full daylight, at other times in the dusk or by artificial light. The phenomena gradually decreased in intensity and frequency from 1887 onwards, and had entirely ceased before 1892. After 1886 Miss Morton records that the figure became less lifelike and distinct.

The figure is stated to have been identified by description as resembling the second Mrs. S. It should be borne in mind, however, that, as the face was never seen, any identification of the kind must be of an uncertain character. It should be added that there is some evidence of the house having the character of being haunted before it was taken by the Mortons. None of the Morton family have experienced any other hallucinations, but Miss Morton has taken part in some successful experi-

ments in thought transference. Instances were observed of terror and other unaccountable behaviour on the part of two dogs, which suggested that they also saw the ghost.

This narrative, it should be explained, cannot be taken as altogether typical. The appearances of the figure were much more frequent than is commonly the case in what may conveniently be called "haunted houses." The figure itself was more substantial-looking and more distinctly seen than many of the figures described in narratives of this class. But it is by the persistence of the apparition in this instance, its movement from place to place, and its apparently purposive action, that the case is most sharply distinguished from the bulk of the accounts furnished to us. It is possible that these very characteristics are due to the same cause which has preserved a contemporary record of the incidents, viz., the scientific temper and training of Miss Morton, who was actually studying medicine at the time when she wrote the account.

However that may be, in the ordinary ghost story, of which we have, as said, numerous examples recorded at first hand, the figure is as a rule seen only for a few moments, vanishing before it can be closely examined; it rarely indicates any purpose, or makes any motion indicative of intelligence. A more significant point is that in very few cases can we be satisfied that the figures seen by the different witnesses can fairly be described as the same figure. The details have in most cases

been committed to writing only after hearing the descriptions of others; so that features discerned or believed to be common become more definite in recollection, and discrepancies tend to disappear. In short, the image which remains in the memories of the percipients is apt to resemble a composite photograph, in which all the common features are emphasised, and details found only in individual cases are blurred or faintly indicated.

But even in the accounts forwarded to us, mostly written some years after the events, when there has been ample time for the several experiences to have been talked over and smoothed into uniformity, it frequently happens that we can discern marked discrepancies in the description of the figures. In many cases the figures seen are admittedly different. In the case, for instance, a fragment of which has been already quoted at the end of the last chapter, (No. 55), the most frequent apparition was a figure, sex uncertain, clothed in black with, according to most witnesses, some white about the head and shoulders. But one inmate of the house saw the figure of a man in his shirt-sleeves; the apparition of a white dog was also seen by several persons. Here then in this one case we have four distinct kinds of apparition.

The impression left upon the mind after a careful survey of the best attested narratives is that the authentic ghost rarely appears in recognisable, perhaps not even in constant shape; that his connection with tragedies is obscure and uncertain. He

appears in fact in most narratives as a fugitive, irrelevant, and frequently polymorphic phantasm. He seems to flit as idly across the scene as the figure cast by a magic lantern, and he possesses apparently as little purpose, volition, or intelligence. Often, indeed, the appearance is so brief and so unsubstantial that it can be called little more than the suggestion of a figure. It bears as little resemblance to the aggrieved miser, the repentant monk, the unquiet spirit of the murderer or his victim, with whom the legends of our childhood and the dinner-parties of our maturer years have made us familiar, as the dragons whom Siegfried slew bear to the winged lizards whose bones lie buried in the Sussex weald.

It would be premature then to conclude, on the faith of one or two striking instances which seem to point in that direction, that the dead have any message to deliver to the living. But if cases of the kind recorded by William Moir and Miss Morton should ultimately be multiplied, such a conclusion would no doubt appear less dubious. To secure that end it is essential to cultivate a scientific attitude towards the facts. Whatever these vague phantasms may ultimately prove to be, whether messages from the dead, or mere random dreams of the living, they are, at any rate, amongst the things that happen. They are questionable shapes, and will, if we persevere, yield an answer to our questioning.

CHAPTER XII

MESSAGES RECEIVED THROUGH TRANCE OR AUTOMATISM

AMONGST the subjects of investigation set out in the original prospectus of the Society, as already indicated, was the study of hypnotism and the phenomena of the induced trance. In the Society's early years some valuable experimental work in this direction was done by the late Edmund Gurney, especially in investigating the relations of the hypnotic to the normal consciousness. And up to the present time we have let pass no opportunity for studying any case of automatism, abnormal lapse of memory, or secondary consciousness. Again, F. W. H. Myers has done the work of a pioneer in his wide survey of the whole field of these perplexing and obscure phenomena, and has shown how order can be evolved out of chaos. But the subject is now recognised as legitimate for scientific enquiry. Even English medical men have at length reluctantly admitted the existence of the hypnotic state, and are beginning to discern in it profitable material for study. On the Continent hypnotism has been incorporated in medical practice

in many independent quarters for nearly a generation; of recent years the baffling manifestations of dissociated personality are, especially in France and America, being made the subject of careful and prolonged research; and automatic reactions are being accurately measured in psychological laboratories. Now that this province has been definitely annexed by medical men and professional psychologists, the special function of the Society for Psychical Research is fulfilled. The investigation is not of course concluded; it is in fact little more than begun. Our own researches will continue, it is hoped, to yield fruit: they are indeed probably necessary for the elucidation of some aspects of the subject. But the study as a whole has reached a stage at which the wider resources of the alienist's clinique, and the more exact methods of the psychological laboratory are needed for its further progress. To enable the reader to appreciate the real bearing of the evidence presented in the two chapters which follow, it is necessary to give some account of the results already attained and of the conclusions to which they point, even though at the present stage of the nascent science a brief summary of this kind must necessarily be incomplete and perhaps to some extent misleading.

Briefly then, to the older philosophy the mind of man seemed a thing apart, a clear-cut indissoluble unity, whose permanence and identity admitted neither doubt or degree. To the new experimental psychology, the unity of consciousness is a mere

illusion; it is even as the "elementary" nature of earth, air, and water, the unreasoned judgment of ignorance. The composite and unstable nature of our consciousness can be inferred even from the manifestations of normal waking and sleep. Our waking consciousness at any given moment may by careful introspection be found to consist in a heterogeneous mass of impressions of every degree of intensity. Take, for instance, the case of a man walking about and talking with a friend in some crowded place. His consciousness will include many distinct groups of ideas; he will be "thinking" primarily of some particular aspect of the subject under discussion, but there will enter as elements into his consciousness ideas of its other aspects and of cognate subjects. He will also be conscious of his interlocutor's appearance, voice, etc.; he will be conscious, more dimly, of the appearance of his surroundings and of the other persons near him; there will probably be present to him also some twilight knowledge of scraps of conversation overheard; and, lastly, there will be an obscure but adequate conception of his own movements in walking and speaking, and of his tactile, muscular, and organic sensations generally.

In the language of physiology, consciousness reflects the simultaneous, co-ordinate activities of an immense number of nerve-centres, but reflects them very imperfectly, much as—to employ Ribot's illustration—a map represents the main features of a countryside.

But when, as in sleep, the pressure on the limits of consciousness is relieved by the inactivity of some of the higher cerebral centres, the "critical point" of consciousness is lowered, various new elements rise above the threshold, and elements hitherto subordinate acquire greater prominence. Of the throng of images present to the mind during sleep, the most part are so evanescent as to fade from the memory shortly after waking. The common run of dreams, no doubt, are comparable in intensity to the feebler reverberations accompanying the main movement of our waking thoughts, and assume temporary importance only because they do not come into competition with more vivid impressions. Thus sensations of organic processes are frequently predominant during sleep, just as the clank and clash of shunting trains, the gross machinery which underlies our social life, forms an unregarded element in the complex mass of sound which fills our ears in the daylight hours, but attains to solitary distinctness in the quiet of the night.

We thus sometimes obtain in dreams knowledge of latent illness of which no sign could be discerned in our waking hours. Again, in sleep we frequently revert to forgotten memories of our earlier years, and our dreams are constantly coloured by the emotional tone which prevailed in childhood. Our consciousness in dreams is thus still a compound, but it is a compound which includes different elements. Further, in dreams there may be spon-

taneous intellectual activity, unrelated to the main stream of consciousness, as when problems are solved or poetry composed in sleep.

Until a generation or two ago the survey of our intellectual processes was practically limited to the two fields of sleep and wakefulness, with stray facts gleaned from delirium or occasional instances of automatic action,— Dr. Carpenter's "unconscious cerebration." But the observations accumulated in the last twenty or thirty years have revolutionised our conception of man's personality. On the one hand, in the hypnotic trance we commonly find a memory and consciousness differing from those of normal life. Many hypnotic subjects retain in waking life no recollection of what they have done and suffered in the hypnotic trance ; but when again hypnotised they can recall all that passed in the previous trance, and will, moreover, almost invariably, be cognisant of their waking life as well. To put it briefly, the hypnotic memory in such cases includes the normal memory, as the larger of two concentric circles includes the smaller. How far this secondary consciousness is pre-existent, or how far it owes its being to the suggestion of the hypnotiser is still undecided. But some experiments made by Edmund Gurney indicate that some of the limitations of consciousness and memory in the hypnotic state are purely artificial. He has shown that in many hypnotic subjects two distinct stages can be demonstrated in the hypnotic trance, each with a memory peculiar to itself and mutually

exclusive. In some subjects, indeed, he succeeded in evoking three such stages, the memory in each being distinct and exclusive, so that the subject in state A would carry on an animated conversation on any imaginary incident suggested to him by Gurney; when thrown into state B he would have completely forgotten the subject of his talk in state A, but would talk on a fresh subject similarly suggested, which would in turn be forgotten on his being placed in state C. He could be led backwards and forwards through these three states several times in the course of an evening, and would converse in each state freely on the ideas peculiar to that state, or on any other which might be suggested to him. After a few days, however, these artificial barriers would disappear, and the trance memory would show itself undivided.

Now the phenomena which can be observed on a small scale in these artificial divisions of memory occur in much more impressive form in certain pathologic cases. Sometimes, as in the life-history of Ansel Bourne, the patient may entirely lose his memory and his sense of identity, and have to begin life over again in an unfamiliar environment. Sometimes, as in the classic case of Felida X., or the more recent history, recorded by Dr. Morton Prince, of Miss Beauchamp, two, or more, states of consciousness may alternate, and this alternation may be observed to continue for years. The memories proper to these states may be mutually exclusive; or on the other hand, the memory

in state B may, as in the hypnotic trance, include that in state A; whilst in state A the unhappy patient may know nothing of his doings and sufferings in state B.

Much light has been thrown upon the pathology of these cases of double consciousness by Janet's studies conducted on hysterical patients in the Salpêtrière. Broadly speaking, he has shown that these alterations of memory and consciousness correspond with alterations in the physical basis of memory. The patient for whom, in the state to which attacks of hystero-epilepsy had reduced her, the memory of a great part of her past life was a blank, possessed also a seriously curtailed sensory equipment. She had no sense of touch, and no muscular sense. She would "lose her legs in bed" as she herself described it, and could walk only by looking at her limbs and the ground. She was very deaf, and her sight, her most serviceable sense, was extremely restricted. But when under hypnotic treatment, she recovered the use of her limbs, and could walk without looking at her feet or the floor, and recovered also her normal powers of vision. A corresponding enlargement of the memory was observed. She would not only be conscious of all her life as a hospital patient, but she could remember also the years of her childhood.

Now there are indications in many cases of spontaneous trance of similar physical deficiencies accompanying, and presumably conditioning, the changes of consciousness. Thus M. Flournoy re-

cords in the case of his subject, Hélène Smith, disturbances of the muscular system (contractions, convulsions, and involuntary movements of various kinds), partial paralysis, and local anæsthetic patches. In less extreme cases the secondary personality may be characterised by neurasthenia, impaired circulation, and generally some degree of ill health. Even in the case of automatic writing it can occasionally be demonstrated that the writing hand is anæsthetic, and some degree of anæsthesia is reported to have been observed in subjects during the performance of a post-hypnotic promise.

Speaking broadly, then, it may be inferred that all changes in memory and consciousness are conditioned by changes in the physical basis of memory and consciousness; in sleep the supply of blood to the brain is diminished; in intoxication the higher centres are poisoned; the enlargement of memory in the case of the Salpêtrière patient represents the removal of an inhibition, the revivification of dormant tracts of cerebral tissue; and even the simplest case of automatic action appears to involve a temporary segregation of certain groups of brain cells constituting a sensori-motor area.

In the more familiar forms of dissociated consciousness—sleep, delirium, alcoholic intoxication, epilepsy—the lines of cleavage are, so to speak, horizontal. It is the higher controlling centres, and generally speaking those parts of the brain concerned with the life of relation, whose activity is repressed or altogether suspended. The total

amount of consciousness, to speak figuratively, may not in all cases be affected, but the level sinks; it includes less of the higher and more of the lower. In various forms of trance, however, and in cases of double personality, the cleavage is commonly vertical. The new consciousness is approximately on the same level as the old. The higher cerebral centres still continue their functions; the new personality is not a mere torso, as in sleep; it is so to speak complete in itself. It is not necessarily either higher or lower, it is merely different. The difference, generally speaking, may be presumed to lie in the inclusion or exclusion of certain sensori-motor areas, the revivification or inhibition of certain cerebral tracts, with all the memories and sensations based upon them. The earliest indications of this vertical cleavage, it should be noted, may be traced in the various forms of automatism, beginning with simple reverie, and going on to crystal gazing, table-turning, and automatic writing. In such cases as a rule the control of the primary consciousness is not lost, but a parasitic secondary consciousness, a small dissociated area, has become active on its own account.

Now the feeling of personal identity depends upon the memory of past and the consciousness of present sensations. Any change in these is liable to impair the sense of personality. That sense of personality is not seriously affected in sleep or intoxication, partly because the states are familiar, partly no doubt because the consciousness is not

so much changed as mutilated. But when the dissociation is of a sudden or unfamiliar kind, and especially when, to continue our metaphor, the lines of cleavage are mainly vertical, the sense of personal identity may be altogether lost. The patient will in such a case feel that he is a different person, and will repudiate his former personality. This in fact is what frequently happens, not only in the more extreme pathologic cases, but even in profound hypnotism or in the spontaneous trance observed at spiritualistic séances. Even the talking table will personify itself, and the hand of the automatic writer will frequently proclaim its separate individuality. The new consciousness will then speak of the normal personality as "he" or "she" or the "medium"; and give to itself a wonderful new name. The name chosen will be apt to reflect the wishes of the entranced subject, or the prepossessions of the bystanders; it may be that of a Hebrew prophet, one of Solomon's genii, an Indian chief, or a deceased friend of those present. It is important to note, however, that this assumption of an alien personality speaking through the entranced person is made in many cases in good faith by all parties concerned. It is, in short, an inference from the observed phenomena, which is almost inevitably made by persons without special knowledge of the subject.[1] The pseudo-personality

[1] It must be admitted that this inference has been drawn in certain cases by observers whose training and special knowledge render them peculiarly qualified to form a judgment in such matters. In discussing the case of Miss Beauchamp, for instance, Mr. W. M'Dougall explicitly rejects the

will in many cases give proof of knowledge outside the range of the primary consciousness; it may show traces of keener sensibilities, and even of new faculties. Again, in some cases, it will act in opposition to its host. It will repudiate their common identity; and will take pains to thwart the schemes made by the other self. This opposition of the primary and secondary consciousness occurs even in the simpler forms of automatism; planchette will frequently write coarse or blasphemous expressions which are repugnant to the upper self. Extreme instances of opposition will be found in certain pathologic cases, especially in the mutual relations of the several "personalities" incarnated in the body of Miss Beauchamp. Strange and almost incredible as are some of the things recorded, they seem to represent no more than an exaggerated form of the struggle between opposing tendencies which is constantly taking place in human life—a struggle which forms indeed the very basis of moral evolution.

Thus, when the secondary personality assumes the name of a deceased friend of those present, mimics his attitude, his gestures and ways of speaking, and the external features of his personality,

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view taken by Dr. Morton Prince himself, that "Sally" is to be regarded as merely a by-product of the patient's mental disintegration, a split-off group of states of consciousness. In Mr. M'Dougall's view, if the facts are correctly recorded, the personality named "Sally" must be regarded as "a psychic being or entity distinct from that of the normal Miss B——": in short, if I understand him rightly, an invading or obsessing spirit. (*Proceedings*, S. P. R., xix., pp. 410 *sqq.*)

the recollection of the extraordinary self-consistency and fidelity with which some entranced subjects will act out impersonations of historic characters compels us to be cautious in endorsing the authenticity of such representations. Even when the pseudo-personality shows an intimate knowledge of the life and family affairs of the deceased person whom it claims to represent, it may be of incidents almost passed from living memories, we are bound to consider whether the knowledge displayed could not have been gained by cunning guesses, or telepathically from the minds of the living friends present in the room. There are, however, as will be seen later, instances on record which are difficult to reconcile with this explanation. And there are a few cases where information has been given by the pseudo-personality which could not apparently have been within the knowledge of any living mind. Such instances are, however, at present scanty and ambiguous; at most, therefore, in view of the momentous issues involved, they may perhaps be held to justify suspension of judgment.

After this preface we will pass to consider some examples of messages received in some form of trance or automatism, or, at lowest, when there is reason to suspect some slight dissociation of consciousness. Sometimes the state of reverie is present in what seems a condition of normal wakefulness. At any rate the lapse from ordinary consciousness may be so slight that the percipient is not aware of any change, and is able to observe and record

his own impressions as if in full possession of his waking faculties. Some of the telepathic impressions cited in previous chapters appear to have been received when the percipient was in a reverie of this character.[1] Crystal visions, it is probable, generally imply some lapse from normal wakefulness. Indeed, as already said, some writers are of opinion that any subjective vision, whether or not attaining to the proportion of an actual hallucination, involves a greater or less degree of dissociation of consciousness. In case No. 50, Chapter X., the description would certainly imply marked divergence from the normal state; but as the experience recorded by Miss Whiting took place when she was in bed, after, as she supposes, she had been awakened from sleep, we should perhaps hardly be justified in regarding it as other than a dream. In the following case we have an example of self-induced reverie. The narrator is a member of the Society for Psychical Research who has long studied psychical phenomena, and is well known as an accurate and impartial investigator. He has for some years made a careful study of his own mental processes; and for the purpose of receiving telepathic impressions, he has cultivated with some success a passive attitude which he has found favourable to their reception, whilst still permitting him to exercise his powers of observation and judgment. The following is one of many apparently veridical impressions in his experience.

[1] See, *e. g.*, No. 15, Chapter III.

No. 62. From Mr. C.[1] Rio de Janeiro

[The record from which this particular incident is extracted is dated May, 1901, but the account is based upon contemporary notes.]

On the 22nd May, 1896, Mr. C., whilst having his hair cut, talked over some psychical experiences with the hairdresser, Senor Guimarães. The latter mentioned some incidents in connection with his dead wife. C. received the impression that the wife's name was Maria—and that white flowers had been strewn over her in her coffin. Both impressions were correct. The name is of course too common to make the coincidence of any particular significance; but white flowers, it is noted, are not generally used in Brazil at the funeral of a married woman. C. further was impressed to draw a profile, which Senor Guimarães recognised as strikingly like the dead woman. Mr. C. then continues:

"On May 26th C.[2] sat alone in his sleeping-room trying for automatic writing. He wrote the name 'Maria,' and afterwards 'Guimarães.' Having asked for further proofs of identity, the experimenter sought for an answer rather in visual terms than in the disconnected and partly illegible words traced by his hand on the paper. Thereupon came dim fragmentary images of ships; he imagined himself under the bows of an ocean steamer; then his vision was focussed for a moment or so on a distant vessel thrown on her beam ends in a rough sea so that the deck was visible. He had an idea that she carried many people on board. Immediately afterwards a boat with green bows was pictured coming up over a large wave. She was also full—perhaps she was bringing away persons from the endangered vessel. There was nothing vivid or decided in all this. The series was more like the faint memory images of events far removed in time. Meanwhile C. had scrawled on the paper, among much that was

[1] *Journal*, S. P. R., March, 1902, pp. 204–08.

[2] The account, though written by C. himself, is thrown for convenience into the third person.

illegible, the words 'bornt' and 'swound,' probably misspellings of 'burnt' and 'swooned.' From these inklings of passive and motor automatism he drew, with anything but confidence, the following conclusions: Maria Guimarães had been in some shipwrecked or burning vessel; she had been taken off in a boat that was painted green; she fainted on the occasion. The whole affair seemed to be so very improbable that C. hesitated to speak to Senor Guimarães about it."

On the 30th May, however, C. related his impression to Senor Pinto, who immediately (*i. e.*, within an hour) made a written note of C.'s vision—"a ship being wrecked and persons who were being saved in a boat." C. thereupon told his vision to Senor Guimarães, who replied that his wife had, before their marriage, been shipwrecked with her mother; that they had been taken off in a boat, Dona Maria in a fainting condition. Senor Guimarães was married in 1873, shortly after his wife's arrival in Brazil from São Miguel. He could not himself remember the name of the wrecked ship, but his daughter thought it was the *Maria da Gloria*. In fact it was ascertained that in 1873, the year of Signora Guimarães's arrival in Brazil, and on a date corresponding to that of her voyage, a vessel named *Maria da Gloria*, trading between the Azores and Brazil, had, after touching at São Miguel, sprung a leak, so that the passengers had to be landed in boats. The vessel was not, however, lost.

It would thus appear that C. received an impression of a striking and unusual incident which had taken place many years before in the life of a dead

person whom he had never seen. No details however seem to have been given which could not have been derived from the mind of the widower.

More generally, however, messages of this kind, purporting to emanate from the dead, are received either when the "medium" is in a state of trance, or if awake, through some form of automatic action. The simplest form of automatism, and that which seems the easiest to cultivate, is the movement of the table in tilting out messages by means of the alphabet, or the movement of some instrument like Ouija, with a pointer and a dial. An instrument of this kind, consisting of a sliding rod and an alphabet board, was the means of communication in the following case. The account was procured by the American Branch of the Society.

No. 63. From Judge W. D. Harden[1]

345 W. 34th St., New York, October 3rd, 1888.

Major Lucius B. died at Savannah, Georgia, on the 1st April, 1888. His widow sent on the 16th April the following statement to Judge Harden.

"In compliance with your request I will state: After my honoured husband Major Lucius B.'s departure from this life, I was in distress of mind that none could understand but one surrounded by similar circumstances. Of his business transactions I knew but little. After a week or two of stunning agony, I aroused myself to look into our financial condition. I was aware that he had in his keeping a note given by Judge H. W. Hopkins to some several hundred which was due, and I searched all the nooks and corners of his secretaire, manuscript, letters, memorandum-books, read several hundred letters; but all for naught. For two months I spent most of

[1] *Proceedings*, S. P. R., vol. viii., pp. 239–41.

the time going over and over, but with the same result. I finally asked him at a séance about the note.

"Q.: 'Have you deposited the note anywhere?' A.: 'I have.'

"Q.: 'Where?' No answer.

[Mrs B. wrote to Judge Hopkins that the note could not be found. But the following Sunday she and her daughter tried to get a communication through the little instrument described.]

"After a little conversation we put our hands on the rod and it promptly spelt 'Look in my long drawer and find Willie.' I became excited, ran to the bureau and pulled out the bottom drawer, turned the contents upon the floor, and commenced to search. Under all the things was a vest; in its little breast pocket was the note.

"Major B. was in the habit of calling the bottom drawer, where only his undergarments were kept, 'My long drawer,' to designate it from several small drawers set aside for his use. The vest was the only garment, other than underwear, in the drawer. The vest was the one taken off him when he first became ill. He was unconscious during the first day of his illness. The vest was put in the drawer after or during his illness by my friend, I think, who assisted in caring for him while sick.

"The drawer had not been opened that we knew of after he left us until the note was discovered. Although I had moved to another room, I gave instructions that the bottom drawer was not to be disturbed.

"As soon as the rod spelt 'Look in my long drawer and find Willie,' I was perfectly electrified with the knowledge that Willie H.'s note was in that drawer, although I never would have thought of looking in such a place for a valuable paper.

"Major B. and myself always spoke to and of Judge H. as 'Willie,' he being a relation of mine and a favourite of Major B. from Willie's childhood."

The account is confirmed by Miss Nina B., who appends her initials. Dr. Louis Knorr, of Savannah,

writes to say that Miss Nina B. went round on the same afternoon to tell him of the discovery of the note; as he was out he did not actually hear the news until later. Mrs. B. knows the event was on a Sunday but cannot remember the exact date; but Dr. Knorr is able to fix it as having been either on the 13th or 20th May.

We have several records in which the fact of a death, unknown to any of those present, has been announced at a spiritualistic séance. In the following case, which was carefully recorded at the time by Professor Aksakof, of St. Petersburg, the announcement was conveyed through automatic writing.

No. 64. From Professor Aksakof [1]

On Jan. 19th, 1887, the engineer Kaigorodoff, of Wilna, called on Professor Aksakof and informed him that his Swiss governess, Mdlle. Emma Stramm, who was in the habit of writing automatically, had received at a séance held in his presence at Wilna, on Jan. 15th at 9 P. M., a message written in French stating that August Duvanel was dead, the cause of death being stated as a clot of blood (*engorgement de sang*). M. Aksakof saw the original communication and made a note of the occurrence.

In four days Mdlle. Stramm received a letter from her father giving the news in the same words; his letter was shown to Professor Aksakof a few days after its receipt. August Duvanel had been a suitor of Mdlle. Stramm, and she had in fact come to Russia in 1881 to escape from him and her parents' importunity. She had not seen or heard of him since her departure. In 1882 Duvanel had left Neufchâtel, where the

[1] The account, which is given at great length in the *Psychische Studien* for Feb., 1887, and in *Proceedings*, S. P. R., vol. vi., pp. 343 *sqq.*, is here briefly summarised.

Stramms lived, and gone to Canton Zürich. On Jan. 15th, 1887, living at the time alone in a small hamlet remote from his friends, August Duvanel, as M. Aksakof afterwards learnt, died by his own hand. The death, by Wilna time, took place at 4.30 P. M.—about five hours before the news was received by Mdlle. Stramm in Wilna. The Stramm family at Neufchâtel did not hear of the death until two days later. No one was with Duvanel when he died; nor would his relations, in any event, have been likely to send a telegram on the subject to Mdlle. Stramm in Russia. Nor could such a telegram, if sent, have been received, so M. Kaigorodoff assured M. Aksakof, without his knowledge. The most puzzling feature in the case remains to be noted. M. Stramm when he wrote to his daughter on the 18th Jan. knew of the circumstances of the death; but to avoid causing her a shock, he ascribed it to *engorgement de sang*, using the same words as those given in the automatic writing; which professed to be dictated by the scribe's spirit brother, Louis.

The facts are fully attested by Professor Aksakof's contemporary notes; so that, short of imputing deliberate deception to the automatist, there seems to be no possible explanation which does not at the least involve telepathy. But such an interpretation presents, as will be seen, considerable difficulty. For a discussion of the interpretation of the case on the assumption of spirit communication the reader is referred to Mr. Myers's comments.[1]

In the following case the "message" was received in the borderland between sleep and waking. The percipient's state seems to have been intermediate between that of the waking automatist, who, as in the cases just recorded, would appear to

[1] *Proceedings*, vi., pp. 348–9.

be almost or altogether in possession of his normal senses, and the entranced medium, in whom the primary consciousness is altogether in abeyance. It is interesting to note that some of the most striking "test" communications are received from Mrs. Piper's lips at the moment when she is emerging from the trance.

No. 65. From Mr. John E. Wilkie[1] (Chief of the Secret Service Department at Washington)

"Washington, April 11th, 1898.

"In October, 1895, while living in London, England, I was attacked by bronchitis in rather a severe form, and on the advice of my physician, Dr. Oscar C. De Wolf, went to his residence in 6 Grenville Place, Cromwell Road, where I could be under his immediate care. For two days I was confined to my bed, and about five o'clock in the afternoon of the third day, feeling somewhat better, I partially dressed myself, slipped on a heavy bath robe, and went down to the sitting-room on the main floor, where my friend, the doctor, usually spent a part of the afternoon in reading. A steamer chair was placed before the fire by one of the servants, and I was made comfortable with pillows. The doctor was present, and sat immediately behind me reading. I dropped off into a light doze, and slept for perhaps thirty minutes. Suddenly I became conscious of the fact that I was about to awaken; I was in a condition where I was neither awake nor asleep. I realised fully that I had been asleep, and I was equally conscious of the fact that I was not wide awake. While in this peculiar mental condition I suddenly said to myself: 'Wait a minute. Here is a message for the doctor.' At the moment I fancied that I had upon my lap a pad of paper, and I thought I wrote upon this pad with a pencil the following words:

"'Dear Doctor: Do you remember Katy McGuire, who

[1] *Journal*, S. P. R., July, 1898.

used to live with you in Chester? She died in 1872. She hopes you are having a good time in London.'

"Instantly thereafter I found myself wide awake, felt no surprise at not finding the pad of paper on my knee, because I then realised that that was but the hallucination of a dream, but impressed with that feature of my thought which related to the message, I partly turned my head, and, speaking over my shoulder to the doctor, said: 'Doctor, I have a message for you.'

"The doctor looked up from the *British Medical Journal* which he was reading, and said: 'What's that?'

"'I have a message for you,' I repeated. 'It is this: "Dear Doctor: Do you remember Katy McGuire, who used to live with you in Chester? She died in 1872. She hopes you are having a good time in London."'"

"The doctor looked at me with amazement written all over his face, and said: 'Why, —— what the devil do you mean?'

"'I don't know anything about it except that just before I woke up I was impelled to receive this message which I have just delivered to you.'

"'Did you ever hear of Katy McGuire?' asked the doctor.

"'Never in my life.'

"'Well,' said the doctor, 'that's one of the most remarkable things I ever heard of.'"

Dr. De Wolf writes:

"6 Grenville Place, Cromwell Road, S. W., May 4th, 1898.

"Dear Sir: Mr. Wilkie's statement is correct except as to unimportant details. My father practised his profession of medicine in Chester, Mass., for sixty years—dying in 1890. I was born in Chester and lived there until 1857, when I was in Paris studying medicine for four years. In 1861 I returned to America and immediately entered the army as surgeon and served until the close of the war in 1865. In 1866 I located in Northampton, Mass., where I practised my profession until 1873, when I removed to Chicago.

"Chester is a hill town in Western Massachusetts, and Northampton is seventeen miles distant. While in Northampton I was often at my father's house—probably every week—and during some of the years from 1866 to 1873 I knew Katy McGuire as a servant assisting my mother.

"She was an obliging and pleasant girl and always glad to see me. She had no family in Chester and I do not know where she came from. Neither do I know where or when she died—but I know she is dead."

Dr. De Wolf adds that Mr. Wilkie was never within five hundred miles of Chester. He adds: "Neither of us were believers in spiritual manifestations of this character, and this event so impressed us that we did not like to talk about it, and it has been very seldom referred to when we met."

It must be borne in mind that the record was made three years after the incident. Moreover, Dr. De Wolf, in answer to our first letter and before receiving from us Mr. Wilkie's account, professed to be unable to "recall with any definite recollection" the circumstances. But there seems little reason to doubt the substantial accuracy of the narrative. We cannot, of course, absolutely exclude the possibility that Mr. Wilkie had at one time heard of these details of his friend's early life. The two had met, as Dr. De Wolf tells us, soon after his removal to Chicago in 1873, when the memory of Kitty McGuire would have been still comparatively recent. But in the circumstances such an explanation can scarcely be held as plausible.

In the next case the percipient was fully entranced. It will be observed that she did not claim to be "possessed," but only to be in communication with spirits of the dead.

No. 66. From Dr. O. Vidigal, San Paulo, Brazil.

[A second-hand account of the case, translated from the *Revue Spirite*, appeared in the spiritualist newspaper *Light* for March 21st, 1896. Subsequently Dr. Hodgson investigated the case, and the testimony of the chief witnesses was obtained both orally and in writing. Dr. Vidigal, his wife, Mr. Edward Silva and his daughter were seen and their evidence obtained in June, 1896. The original account, drawn up after Dr. Hodgson's inquiries, and printed in the *Journal*, S. P. R., for October, 1898, is extremely long. A brief summary of the case is therefore printed here.]

In September, 1893, Dr. Vidigal went to the Emigration Depôt and engaged as a servant a young Spanish girl of ten or twelve years of age, who had arrived in Brazil only a day or two previously. Very soon after her arrival at Dr. Vidigal's house (perhaps on the same evening) she was hypnotised by a visitor, Mr. Edward Silva, at the request of Dona Vidigal's mother, who asked that the girl should try to see what was going on at her hacienda some miles distant. Instead of replying to the questions put to her, however, the girl had visions on her own account:—beautiful sights as she described them. She then professed to get into communication with her own father. Later she gave a message purporting to proceed from Dr. Vidigal's mother, who had died on the 16th June, some three months before the date of the séance. The message was to the effect that the deceased lady had left a sum of 75 milreis (between £3 and £4) in the pocket of a dress which was still hanging in her room. Most of the dead lady's wardrobe had been given away; but two dresses still remained in the room. The room had not, it is believed, been entered since her death; and nothing was known of the existence of

the sum of money. In fact the family were rather straitened at the time and in want of money. Dona Julia (Dr. Vidigal's wife), with another lady, went straightway to the room and found sewn up in one of the two dresses the exact sum of money described.

From the careful enquiry into this case, there can be little doubt that the circumstances are correctly stated. And it is extremely difficult to suppose that the fact communicated was known to any living person. Mr. Silva, it should be added, had made the acquaintance of Dr. Vidigal only a short time previously, and had never known the deceased lady. None of Dr. Vidigal's family had entered the room in which his mother had died since her death, and he is satisfied that none of the servants would do so.

CHAPTER XIII

THE CASE OF MRS. PIPER

FROM the sporadic instances of automatic communications cited in the last chapter we will pass to consider the detailed records which have been preserved of the utterances of certain persons who have systematically practised automatism. Of these records the most valuable, from the information which it may be expected ultimately to furnish as to the nature and working of the automatic processes, is the account of her own script kept by Mrs. Verrall, Classical Lecturer at Newnham College, known also as the translator of Pausanias. I have used the words "may be expected to furnish" advisedly, for Mrs. Verrall's experiments are still proceeding, and careful and exhaustive as is the record of the actual script and all the attendant circumstances, the problems presented seem to increase in complexity with the increase of material offered for solution. Mrs. Verrall, who has made successful experiments in thought transference, and also in crystal gazing and other forms of automatism, began in January, 1901, to endeavour to obtain automatic writing. At first she met with little success, but on the 5th of March of the same year,

when sitting in the dark, the pencil in her hand wrote rapidly a page or two (about 80 words) of Latin. From this time forward Mrs. Verrall has written frequently. She is conscious of the meaning of the actual word at the moment of writing, but it is forgotten almost as soon as written, and she never realises the drift of the whole passage until it is read through after completion. It is clear, therefore, that the messages so written are not composed by her ordinary consciousness. The script, as said, began with Latin, and Latin for long continued to be the chief language of the communications. Greek also appeared, but not so frequently; most of the communications now are written in English. Mrs. Verrall reads and speaks French fluently; and is also acquainted with Italian and German, but only a few words or phrases in any of these languages have appeared. Mrs. Verrall is constantly employed in reading and teaching Latin or Greek, and is, of course, well acquainted with both languages. But the Latin and Greek employed in the script are by no means the Latin and Greek which she would herself use. The Greek, in particular, not only contains many words unknown to classical Greek, but words not to be found in any dictionary, or words Greek in form but having apparently no meaning. Both in form and content, moreover, some of the Greek resembles the writings of the Neo-Platonists (Plotinus, Macrobius, etc.), with whom, until recently, Mrs. Verrall was entirely unacquainted. Speaking

generally the messages are apt to be incoherent, allusive, and enigmatical. Many are extremely difficult to interpret. As regards their source, in no case does the writing purport to proceed from Mrs. Verrall herself; it is apparently addressed to her, but the statements are frequently impersonal in form, and are rarely signed. In some cases the signature or initials of a dead person are appended. There is very little evidence, however, to prove the identity of the persons purporting to communicate. On the other hand, the writing in many cases seems to show knowledge of the thoughts and experiences of others which Mrs. Verrall could not have acquired by normal means.

In the following case it would appear that the intelligence which inspired Mrs. Verrall's script was able to satisfy a test propounded by Dr. Hodgson on the other side of the Atlantic.

No. 67. From Mrs. Verrall

On the 31st January, 1902, Mrs. Verrall, when about to accompany Sir Oliver Lodge and Mr. Piddington to a meeting, was seized with a sudden desire to write, and withdrew for the purpose. The writing produced was as follows:

"Panopticon *σφαιρᾶς ατιτάλλει συνδέγμα μυστικὸν. τί οὖν ἐδίδως;* volatile ferrum—pro telo impinget."

The writing was shown to Dr. Verrall on the following day, but neither he nor Mrs. Verrall could interpret its significance. The first word, Panopticon, though not an actual Greek word, is derived from the Greek, and presumably means "all seeing."[1] The third word in the sentence is rare, the fourth,

[1] The word Panopticon was used by Bentham to denote a building (school or prison) so constructed that a single person in the centre could supervise a

though correctly formed is not found in any extant Greek writing. The whole sentence appears to mean, "The all-seeing of the sphere fosters a mystic joint-reception. Why did you not give it? The flying iron ["iron" used for "weapon"] will hit." *Volatile ferrum* (literally "the flying iron") is used by Virgil for a spear, and Mrs. Verrall recorded in her note-book that the word was probably meant to be translated "spear."

In Boston, U. S. A., on the 28th January, three days before this incident, Dr. Hodgson held a sitting with Mrs. Piper, the well-known trance medium, at which an allusion was made by the "control"[1] to Mrs. Verrall's daughter. Hodgson asked if the "control" could make Miss Helen Verrall see him (*i.e.*, the "control") holding a spear in his hand. The control asked, through the automatic writing, "Why a sphere?" and Hodgson repeated "*spear*." At the next sitting, on February 4th, the control claimed that he had made himself visible to Miss Verrall with a "sphear" (so spelt in the trance writing).

It is certainly difficult to avoid the conclusion that Mrs. Verrall's script of the 31st January, — a date intermediate between these two séances,— with its curious enigmatical allusions to "sphere" and "spear," had reference to this transatlantic experiment.[2]

In another case the message given purported definitely to come from the dead. Mrs. Verrall,

number of radiating galleries or rows of desks. The late Millbank prison was constructed on the Panopticon principle. See Wallas' *Life of Francis Place*, p. 104.

[1] *I.e.* the spirit assumed to be controlling, or speaking through Mrs. Piper's organism. The control had already claimed to have some knowledge of *Miss* Verrall—hence the introduction of her name in the test, instead of Mrs. Verrall's. For an account of Mrs. Piper's trance communications, see the latter part of this chapter.

[2] *Proceedings*, S.P.R., vol. xx., p. 214.

in December, 1900, had made the acquaintance of Mrs. "Forbes," also an automatic writer; and thenceforward their respective scripts contained many apparent allusions to each other's concerns. One of the "controls" purporting to communicate through Mrs. Forbes was her son Talbot — who had been killed in the Boer War.

No. 68. From Mrs. Verrall

Mrs. Verrall had no communication with Mrs. Forbes between 16th April, and October, 1901. But on the 28th August of that year her hand wrote:

"Signa sigillo. Conifera arbos in horto iam insita omina sibimet ostendit."[1]

"The script," Mrs. Verrall writes, "was signed with a scrawl and three drawings representing a sword, a suspended bugle, and a pair of scissors; thus:

"A suspended bugle surmounted by a crown is the badge of the regiment to which Talbot Forbes belonged. Mrs. Forbes has in her garden four or five small fir-trees grown from seed sent to her from abroad by her son; these are called by her Talbot's trees. This fact was entirely unknown to me. On August 28th Mrs. Forbes' script contained the statement, purporting to come from her son, that he was looking for a

[1] *Trans.*: "Sign with the seal. The fir-tree that has already been planted in the garden gives its own portent."

'sensitive' who wrote automatically, in order that he might obtain corroboration for her own writing, and it concluded with the remark that he must now leave her in order to join E.G. in controlling the sensitive. The hour of her writing on August 28th does not appear, but as she usually writes early in the day, and as mine of the same date was at 10.30 P.M., it is probable that hers preceded mine.

"It thus appears that on a certain day 'Talbot Forbes' in Mrs. Forbes' script declared that he was seeking and implied that he had found another automatic writer through whom to communicate with her.[1] On the same day a statement was made in my script about fir-trees planted in a garden which had a meaning for Mrs. Forbes, and a special connexion with her automatic experiments, and the signature of this script, to which attention had been directed, represented partially the badge of Talbot Forbes' regiment, together with a sword.[2] As bearing on the question whether such a combination is likely to have been accidental, I may say that on no other occasion has a bugle appeared in the script, nor has there been any other reference to a planted fir-tree."[3]

The coincidence of the two writings was only brought to light accidentally, in November, owing to Mrs. Forbes, in talking with Mrs. Verrall about her son, happening to describe the regimental badge. Mrs. Verrall then remembered the drawing above reproduced, which had puzzled her at the time. The nail from which the bugle is hung is clearly indicated in the original.[4]

[1] The actual words are, *I am looking for a sensitive who writes to tell Father to believe I can write through you. . . . I have to sit with our friend Edmund to control the sensitive.*—(Signed with Talbot Forbes's initials.)

[2] No explanation of the open scissors has been suggested.

[3] Except once subsequently, on November 27th, 1901, after verification of the incident, when it was quoted as an encouragement.

[4] *Proceedings*, S. P. R., vol. xx., 222.

In two or three instances Mrs. Verrall's script has apparently referred to future events. An example of these prophetic intimations will be given in the next chapter.

Mrs. Verrall, it will have been observed, during the process of automatic writing retains her ordinary consciousness, and whatever view we may hold of the nature of the "communicator," it seems probable that this circumstance tends to embarrass the process of communication. At any rate the most striking messages of this type have been obtained when the automatist is in a condition of trance, and the ordinary personality altogether in abeyance, as in the instance of Dr. Vidigal's servant cited in the last chapter. Other cases of the kind, in which messages purporting to emanate from the dead have been given have been investigated, of recent years by the Society for Psychical Research.[1] But isolated instances possess comparatively little weight, partly because we can rarely be sure of the adequacy of the record, if it stands alone, but chiefly because of the much greater scope offered for chance coincidence, if only the successes are noted. What is desired in such cases is a full record of all the utterances of the entranced person, such as Mrs. Verrall has kept of her own automatic writing. A few such records had been kept before 1882. Two of the most notable are

[1] See, especially, the case of Wilson Quint, recorded in *Proceedings*, viii., 206, Mr. Jobson's case (*Journal*, November, 1898), and the case recorded by Colonel Taylor and Mr. Piddington (*Journal*, July, 1903).

those concerned with the utterances of Stainton Moses, and of Adèle Maginot, the clairvoyant subject of Alphonse Cahagnet, a French magnetist in the middle of the last century. In the case of Stainton Moses, however, it does not appear that any verifiable statements were given in his automatic writings as to facts outside the possible scope of the medium's knowledge. The dates, names, and other particulars could in every case have been procured from published biographies, the obituary notices in the newspapers, or equally accessible sources.[1]

The revelations of Adèle Maginot are much more striking. Adèle professed in the trance to see the figures of deceased friends of persons who came to consult her. She would describe with accuracy their personal appearance, character, and the diseases from which they had suffered, and could occasionally indicate something of their history and their opinions. But all the verifiable details given were known to the persons present; and there seems no reason, in the case of Cahagnet's subject, to go beyond the hypothesis of thought transference from the living.

The case of Mrs. Piper, the chief of the trance mediums whose utterances have been investigated by the Society for Psychical Research, presents a much more complicated problem. Mrs. Piper is an

[1] See my discussion of these communications in *Studies in Psychical Research*, pp. 125–133.

American lady who first went into a spontaneous trance some time in 1884, at a consultation for medical purposes with a professional clairvoyant named Cocke. Her first control was an Indian girl named "Chlorine." Mrs. Piper from 1884 onward has habitually fallen into a trance state. From the end of 1885 until the present time she has been almost continuously under the observation of the S. P. R., and for many years all her séances have been given under the guidance of Dr. Hodgson or other members of the Society, and the results carefully recorded.

Mr. Cocke himself, the clairvoyant referred to, was accustomed to rely in his medical practice upon the "spirit" of a French doctor named Finné. After several other "controls"—Mrs. Siddons, Longfellow, Commodore Vanderbilt, and John Sebastian Bach—had in turn usurped her organism, the chief control of Mrs. Piper's trance finally gave himself out as a French doctor named Phinuit—a name apparently suggested by that of Mr. Cocke's control.

Dr. Phinuit's own account of himself is that he is a French physician, who was born at Marseilles about 1790, and died about 1860. He has given various particulars about his birth, education, and life in Paris, but the enquiries which have been made have failed to reveal any trace of such a person as having lived and died as stated. Moreover, it appears that, though Phinuit is sometimes very felicitous in diagnosing the ailments of those who

consult him, his medical knowledge is extremely limited; he does not know the Latin names of the various drugs which he prescribes, and cannot recognise common medicinal herbs when shown to him. In other words, he has given no indications of possessing any scientific knowledge of medicine. Moreover, though professing to be the spirit of a French doctor, his knowledge of French appears to extend only to a few simple phrases, and a slight accent, occasionally serviceable in disguising a bad shot at a proper name. This ignorance of his native language is, he explains, due to his having lived for some years in Metz, where there were many English residents! When all these suspicious circumstances, especially the similarity between the names of Finné and Phinuit, were brought by Dr. Hodgson to Phinuit's notice, that personage professed to remember that his real name was not after all Phinuit, but Alaen. Further, he betrayed some uncertainty whether he had been born at Marseilles or Metz, and whether he had passed the latter part of his life at Metz or Paris. It seems, then, that we need not seriously consider whether Phinuit is in very deed the spirit he would be taken for.

Mrs. Piper in ordinary life knows nothing of her sayings and doings in the trance state, and the above account implies, of course, no reflection on her honesty. But in attempting to estimate the significance of the more striking impersonations which have characterised Mrs. Piper's later trances,

it is important to remember that the first impersonation of the kind, though showing considerable dramatic coherence and individuality, was almost certainly fictitious. Mrs. Piper's clairvoyance is on the same general lines as that of Cahagnet's subject. Her trance consciousness "sees" or receives impressions from deceased friends of those who come to consult her. The messages which she gives generally purport to pass through the mind of the chief control. Phinuit, then for a time George Pelham, and now "Rector" and Richard Hodgson, have each in turn thus professed to act as interpreter and mouthpiece for the spirits of the dead who throng round the entranced medium. In her earlier trances the utterances were mostly oral. Since 1892 they have been mainly, and of late years almost entirely, written. The strictest precautions have been taken to exclude the possibility of fraud; for years past all sittings have been arranged by some member of the Society for Psychical Research, the visitors have been introduced anonymously or under assumed names; and full notes have been taken of all the remarks made and other attendant circumstances. But the real proof that fraud is not the explanation lies in the nature of the revelations actually made. The things which a private enquiry agency could conceivably ascertain—names, dates, and other externals of personal history—are precisely the things which are generally lacking in Mrs. Piper's communications. What she does give—descriptions of the diseases, personal

idiosyncrasies, thoughts, feelings, and characters of the sitter and his friends; their loves, hates, quarrels, sympathies, and mutual relationships; trivial but significant incidents in their past histories, and the like—are precisely the things on which private enquiry would find it most difficult to obtain information, and which would, further, be most difficult, when obtained, to preserve in the memory.

But an illustration will make the case clearer. The Piper records are so voluminous, most of the sittings having been recorded in full, that it is impossible to quote more than the records of a single sitting at length. I select the following case partly because the circumstance that the sitter was only on a visit to America practically rules out the possibility of private enquiry on Mrs. Piper's part into his circumstances, partly because the nature of the information given is in other ways significant. The narrator, Mr. J. T. Clarke, had left England, in the autumn of 1889, for a hurried business visit to America. There he had an interview with Mrs. Piper. Mr. Clarke had friends in Boston, some of whom had had sittings with Mrs. Piper, but his wife and children had never been in America.

Notes of this séance were taken by Dr. Hodgson, and Mr. Clarke after the séance added his comments. These comments, or the substance of them in an abbreviated form, are placed in the account which follows between brackets.

No. 69. From Mr. J. T. Clarke

Chocorua, New Hampshire, in House of Dr. William James, September 20, 1889.

Mr. Clarke fixes his mind steadily upon a certain house, and visualises members of family; of this no recognition by medium, who begins:

(1) "Why! I know you! I have seen your influence somewhere before! What are you doing over here?"

[Mr. Clarke explains that some intimate friends had had sittings with Mrs. Piper, in the course of which his name and that of his mother had been mentioned.]

(2) "Oh! There is lots of trouble over you, black clouds all over you; but I see light beyond; you will come out all right. It is financial trouble that I mean; you will wade through it all right in the end."

[Correct. My visit to America was determined by a financial failure, the loss from which I was then endeavouring to minimise.]

"How long hence?"

(3) "Four months or four months and a half. There are parties that have not dealt honourably with you."

[Mr. Clarke adds that he had at the time a lurking distrust —afterwards proved to be unfounded—of the "parties" referred to.]

(4) "I see your lady in the spirit, your mother—have seen her before."

[There followed a clear account of my own conception of my mother, recently deceased, whose constant presence in my mind readily accounts for the frequent mentions of her.]

(5) "You've also got a lady in the body, your wife. You won't find her very well."

[Prophecy wrong. My wife never better in health.]

(6) "Do you know a man named Williams—no, wait! Williamson? [Reply, "No."] Tall, rather dark, first name Henery [*sic*]. He will come into your surroundings soon—he will have something to do with your papers and with law. He

will look after your interests and get you out all right. You will meet him very soon—within a few weeks."

[Mr. Clarke had written down in his note-book some days previously the name of the lawyer—Lambertson—entrusted with his defence; but had completely forgotten it.]

(7) "Part of your interest is in the ground; you came near being 'left' in this business, but are not altogether."

[Correct. Property consisted of a town lot and buildings, and I certainly felt that I had come near losing it.]

"Tell me about my mother."

(8) "Your mother is with us. She is here and happy in the spirit."

[This, I take it, is the way that mediums, burdened with the conventional views and the phrases customary in spiritualistic circles, find most natural to express the conception which they receive from another mind of a person being a memory, an image of the mind as opposed to a living reality.]

(9) "Who is this M. your cousin? Your mother says she is not very well. She is getting better, but she will continue weak."

[The health of the person referred to, though improved at the time, had caused both myself and my mother much solicitude.]

"Can you see my children?"

(10) "Wait. . . . Who is this about you that is musical, that plays the piano [imitating action of fingers]? Ah, it is your lady in the body. She is not very well just now—she is suffering from rheumatism."

[My wife plays the piano much. She was well and has never suffered from rheumatism.]

"Do you see my children?"

(11) "No, not at all yet; I shall directly. Wait. Who is this Fred, that comes together with your mother?"

[A cousin lost at sea ten years ago, under peculiarly shocking circumstances. His death made a great impression upon me.]

"Is he not your cousin?"

"Yes."

(12) "He comes with your mother. She knows him better now than she did before death. . . . Who is this uncle of yours, named John?"

"I have no uncle John."

"Yes, yes, you have—the man that married your aunt."

"No, you are wrong; the man that married my aunt was called Philip."

"Well, I think I know." [Changes subject, grumbling.]

[I had entirely forgotten for the moment that an aunt of mine had indeed married a man named John, with whom I had formerly had some correspondence. I did not recollect this until the following day.]

(13) "Why! you are a funny fellow—you are covered with paint from head to foot. Your mother says it is too bad."

[I had been much interested in painting the walls of a room in the house of my friend for some days previously.]

(14) "I'd like to know who this H. is that you are going to see. Take good care of that man. He is a tricky one. Don't let him get you into his power."

[This is an altogether unjust accusation, based upon an unwarrantable distrust entertained by me at the time.]

(15) "Here is your Rebecca!"

[Clarke and Hodgson both ask "Mine?" each having relatives of that name.]

[To Clarke:] "Your Rebecca, your little girl. She runs around and gives her hand to every one about her."

"Is there another little one like her?"

"Yes, there are three of your people together there now."

[My wife and two children.]

(16) "How is Rebecca?"

"Very well."

"Where is she now?"

"She is in the spirit. That is to say, her spirit's here, but her body is at a distance."

[My child was in Germany at the time, and thus lived rather in my memory than in my daily view. Hence, although the medium felt that she was alive ("Her body is at

a distance") her personality was yet spoken of as "in the spirit."]

(17) "You will soon have a surprise. It is a photograph of your boy that is being made for you. It is unfinished yet, but will surprise you."

[I was at that time taking photographs which were not to be developed, and consequently could not be seen, until my return to England.]

(18) "There are five of you; yourself, your two children, your lady in the body, and your lady in the spirit."

[This is my constant feeling—the "we are seven" of my surroundings.]

(19) "What are these tickets that you have in your pocket? There are figures on them stamped in red, and they are signed with names underneath. They will be of value to you, you will get something out of them."

"No, I have nothing of the kind in my pocket."

[Mr. Clarke explains that he afterwards found he actually had in an inside pocket two cheques endorsed on the back as described, and stamped with large and peculiar red numbers.]

(20) "Where is my wife?"

"She is across country. She has been away."

[My wife had intended to go to Germany, from England, soon after my sudden departure for the United States; I did not positively know that she was away from home, but I should have assumed it as well-nigh certain.]

(21) "There is a young man and an old lady with her."

[There followed an accurate interpretation of my estimate of the characters of these two persons, who I knew must be together with my wife]. ". . . The young man is coming back again; he is going still more across country."

[Correct. I knew that my brother-in-law had to return from the Tyrol to his home on the Baltic.]

(22) . . . [Further reference to my mother, describing her character, and representing her as she lives in my memory.] ". . . That is an old-fashioned portrait of her, not very good, but better than nothing."—"Where? Which

one?"—"It is at home. I mean the one with the collarette."

[A sufficient indication of one of the few portraits of my mother.]

(23) "Who is this funny footed fellow of yours, the one with the club feet and the funny shoes? Your mother says it is an injustice to you, too bad—but it will come out all right."

[Correct. My boy was born with club feet, and wears machine boots.]

(24) "Why? You 've changed your house recently."

"No."

"Yes, your lady has changed her house."

"Well, you may mean that she is away from her house; that is true. Now describe the house in which we live generally."

"Yes. Wait a minute. I will go into the door at the side. What is that tall, old-fashioned thing in the back room? Ah, it is a big clock."

[Correct.]

(25) "Now go into the kitchen."

"Yes. No one is here now [10 P.M. in New Hampshire—3 A.M. in England]. A fat person, a cook, has been here. Big man, with a dark moustache, has also been here a good while during the day, and has left his influence here."

"Who is he?"

"He has been put to watch the place."

"Is he trustworthy and faithful?"

"Yes, he is trustworthy."

[Interesting error. It was arranged on my leaving England—in case the servant should object to being left in the house alone during the absence of my wife in Germany—that a policeman should be hired to guard the house and to live in it. As a matter of fact, however, there was no man in the house.]

(26) "You have lost your knife! Your mother tells me that."

[This loss had vexed me, as the knife had been made to order. I had lost it shortly before leaving England.]

(27) "Where is it?"

"Oh, it is gone; you will never see it again."

[The prophecy proved to be signally wrong, as the knife was restored to me soon after my return.]

(28) "Describe the other room on the ground floor now."

"Yes. I see a long piano. What is that high thing that comes forward on top of the piano? Ah, I see; it is the lid."

[Clock and piano are respectively chief features of the two rooms].

(29) "What colour is the wall paper of this room?"

"Let me see. It is yellowish with gold pattern and gold spots."

[Correct.]

"In short, many things that I knew, even some things that I had forgotten, the clairvoyant could tell me correctly, albeit somewhat confusedly. She made all the mistakes that I should have made at the time, and her prophecies were quite as erroneous as any that I might have invented myself.

"One sees the contents of one's mind, as in a warped and flawy mirror; or, to take the case from the other side, the secondary consciousness of the medium seems able to get occasional glimpses of the panorama of one's memory as through the rents in a veil. No doubt Phinuit gives the fullest and best results when left unquestioned to tell what he can. If pressed to fill up the broad expanses of the picture remaining between the patches which he sees, he is obliged, despite his pretensions to supernatural knowledge, to take refuge in awkward evasions and 'shuffling,'—in guesswork, often clearly based upon hints unconsciously afforded by the sitter,—or, when all else fails, in incoherent and unmeaning talk. Yet, while fully recognising these repelling features of the manifestations, I am yet convinced that there is enough that is genuine remaining to prove the existence of a direct communication between mind and mind during the trance state. A single success exceeding the limits of coincidence (and it is undeniable that there are many such) proves the possibility; the multitude of failures merely indicates the difficulty and uncertainty.[1] J. T. C."

[1] *Proceedings*, S. P. R., vol. vi., pp. 569–574.

It will be seen that here most of the statements made, except those which concern the future, were correct. No true statement was made, however, on any matter not known to Mr. Clarke. We need not look further than telepathy for an explanation in such a case. Indeed, as Mr. Clarke points out, one or two of the statements made, though they failed to correspond to the facts of the case, suggest rather strongly that Phinuit was reproducing the thoughts—conscious or latent—of the sitter.

It is not so easy, however, to explain by thought transference the following case:

No. 70. From Sir Oliver Lodge, F.R.S.

"It happens that an uncle of mine in London, now quite an old man, and one of a surviving three out of a very large family, had a twin brother who died some twenty or more years ago. I interested him generally in the subject, and wrote to ask if he would lend me some relic of this brother. By morning post on a certain day I received a curious old gold watch, which this brother had worn and been fond of; and that same morning, no one in the house having seen or knowing anything about it, I handed it to Mrs. Piper when in a state of trance.

"I was told almost immediately that it had belonged to one of my uncles—one that had been mentioned before as having died from the effects of a fall—one that had been very fond of Uncle Robert, the name of the survivor—that the watch was now in possession of this same Uncle Robert, with whom he was anxious to communicate. After some difficulty and many wrong attempts Dr. Phinuit caught the name, Jerry, short for Jeremiah, and said emphatically, as if a third person was speaking: 'This is my watch, and Robert is my brother, and I am here. Uncle Jerry, my watch.' All this at the first sitting on the very morning the watch had arrived by post, no

one but myself and a shorthand clerk who happened to have been introduced for the first time at this sitting by me, and whose antecedents are well known to me, being present."

[Then, in response to Sir O. Lodge's request for incidents in Uncle Jerry's boyhood, 60 or 70 years before] "Uncle Jerry recalled episodes, such as swimming the creek when they were boys together, and running some risk of getting drowned; killing a cat in Smith's field; the possession of a small rifle, and of a long peculiar skin, like a snake-skin, which he thought was now in the possession of Uncle Robert.

"All these facts have been more or less completely verified. But the interesting thing is that his twin brother, from whom I got the watch, and with whom I was thus in a sort of communication, could not remember them all. He recollected something about swimming the creek, though he himself had merely looked on. He had a distinct recollection of having had the snake-skin, and of a box in which it was kept, though he does not know where it is now. But he altogether denied killing the cat, and could not recall Smith's field.

"His memory, however, is decidedly failing him, and he was good enough to write to another brother, Frank, living in Cornwall, an old sea captain, and asked if he had any better remembrance of the facts—of course not giving any inexplicable reasons for asking. The result of this enquiry was triumphantly to vindicate the existence of Smith's field as a place near their home, where they used to play, in Barking, Essex; and the killing of a cat by another brother was also recollected; while of the swimming of the creek, near a mill-race, full details were given, Frank and Jerry being the heroes of that foolhardy episode."[1]

This account may, indeed, conceivably be explained as the result of a process of telepathic conveyance from Sir Oliver Lodge's mind of things heard in boyhood and long ago forgotten. Sir O.

[1] *Proceedings*, S. P. R., vol. vi., pp. 458–60.

Lodge himself, however, has no recollection of having heard of these incidents, and regards this explanation as extremely improbable. And it is clear that each fresh case to which this hypothesis has to be applied increases the difficulty of the explanation. Sir O. Lodge enumerates in the English observations of 1888–9 no less than forty-one instances in which details were reproduced by Phinuit which were "unknown to, or forgotten by, or unknowable to, persons present."[1] Some of these incidents, no doubt, such as the episode of the red-stamped cheques in Mr. Clarke's case, readily suggest the telepathic transference of ideas latent in the sitter's mind. But in a few instances it is not merely improbable that the facts mentioned by Phinuit should at any time have been within the knowledge of any persons present at the sitting, but, as in the account just quoted, the mode of presentation of the facts and the attendant circumstances certainly lend some additional weight to an alternative hypothesis, that of spirit communication. No doubt in view of Phinuit's past history it is right that the evidence derived from dramatic personation should be subject to a considerable discount. And, indeed, partly on this account, and partly because the cases published up to the end of 1892 which seemed to call for some other explanation than telepathy were few in number, the problem did not for a considerable time present itself in an urgent form. Of late years, however, a consider-

[1] *Proceedings*, S.P.R., vol. vi., pp. 649–50.

able addition has been made to the evidence. In February, 1892, there died in New York quite suddenly, at the age of thirty-three, one George Pelham,[1] an author of some promise. He had been known personally to Dr. Hodgson, and had two years before his death promised that if "still existing" after death he would do his utmost to prove the fact to Dr. Hodgson, should the latter survive him.

Pelham was an associate of the American Branch of the Society for Psychical Research, and in 1888 had had one sitting with Mrs. Piper, one of a series of sittings arranged by a committee. But the names of the sitters were carefully guarded by the committee: Pelham never attended another sitting, and never saw Mrs. Piper again. Moreover, despite the promise above referred to he had little interest in the question of a future life, thinking it, as Hodgson tells us, an almost inconceivable possibility. No allusion to Pelham was made at the sittings with Mrs. Piper, until the 22nd of March, 1892, four or five weeks after his death. On that day, an intimate friend of his, John Hart,[2] had arranged through Hodgson for a sitting. Hart's real name was not, of course, mentioned to Mrs. Piper.

No. 71. From Mr. John Hart

[At the commencement of the sitting there were some references, mostly correct, to deceased relatives of the sitter.

[1] This name is substituted for the real name.

[2] This name and most of the other names mentioned in connection with the "G. P." case, are assumed, Most of the witnesses were, however, known intimately by Dr. Hodgson and Mr. Myers.

Hart's own surname was also given in full. Then, shortly after a reference to a deceased Uncle George, whose watch had been brought to the sitting, Phinuit continued, according to Hodgson's report :]

"There is another George who wants to speak to you. How many Georges are there about you any way ?"

The rest of the sitting, until almost the close, was occupied by statements from G. P., Phinuit acting as intermediary. George Pelham's real name was given in full, also the names, both Christian and surname, of several of his most intimate friends, including the name of the sitter.

Moreover, incidents were referred to which were unknown to the sitter or myself.[1]

One of the pair of studs which J. H. was wearing was given to Phinuit. . . . "(Who gave them to me?) That 's mine. I gave you that part of it. I sent that to you. (When ?) Before I came here. That 's mine. Mother gave you that. (No.) Well, father then, father and mother together. You got those after I passed out. Mother took them. Gave them to father, and father gave them to you. I want you to keep them. I will them to you." Mr. Hart notes: "The studs were sent to me by Mr. Pelham as a remembrance of his son. I knew at the time that they had been taken from G.'s body. and afterwards ascertained that his stepmother had taken them from the body and suggested that they would do to send to me, I having previously written to ask that some little memento be sent to me."

James and Mary [Mr. and Mrs.] Howard were mentioned with strongly personal specific references, and in connection with Mrs. Howard came the name Katharine. "Tell her, she 'll know. I will solve the problems, Katharine." Mr. Hart notes: "This had no special significance for me at the time, though I was aware that Katharine, the daughter of Jim

[1] *I. e*, Hodgson, who reports the incidents of the sitting. In the account which follows the statements made by the "control" are put in inverted commas (" "); and Hart's interjected remarks in parentheses ( ). Hodgson's comments are in brackets [ ].

Howard, was known to George, who used to live with the Howards. On the day following the sitting, I gave Mr. Howard a detailed account of the sitting. These words, "I will solve the problems, Katharine," impressed him more than anything else, and at the close of my account he related that George, when he had last stayed with them, had talked frequently with Katharine (a girl of fifteen years of age) upon such subjects as Time, Space, God, Eternity, and pointed out to her how unsatisfactory the commonly accepted solutions were. He added that some time he would solve the problems, and let her know, using almost the very words of the communication made at the sitting." Mr. Hart added that he was entirely unaware of the circumstances. I was myself unaware of them, and was not at that time acquainted with the Howards, and in fact nearly every statement made at the sitting, during which I was the note-taker, concerned matters of which I was absolutely ignorant.

Meredith, an intimate friend of Mr. Hart and G. P., was mentioned. "Lent a book to Meredith. Tell him to keep it for me. Go to my room where my desk is." In reply to enquiries (April, 1892) Meredith stated that the last time he saw Pelham was in Pelham's own room several months before the latter's death. They had spent the greater part of the day together, and Pelham had pressed Meredith to take away some of his manuscripts and books. Thus far the reference to Meredith seems to have been correct. But Meredith was unable to remember definitely that he took any manuscript or book away. . . .

[The communication then continues:] "John, if that is you, speak to me. Tell Jim I want to see him. He will hardly believe me, believe that I am here. I want him to know where I am. . . . O good fellow. All got dark, then it grew light. Where is Uncle Will? I met Uncle Willie, William. (I don't know what you mean.) Ask mother. She 'll know." [G. P. had no Uncle William deceased. He had a deceased great-uncle William, on his mother's side, who was thus the uncle of his mother deceased and his stepmother living, who are sisters.]

"Go up to my room. (Which room?) Up to my room, where I write. I'll come. Speak to me, John. (What room?) Study. (You said something about a desk just now.) I left things all mixed up. I wish you 'd go up and straighten them out for me. Lot of names. Lot of letters. I left things mixed up. You answer them for me. Wish I could remember more, but I 'm confused. C L U B. Went to the Club. Two things at the Club to make right. (What Club?) His hander—(handkerchief.) Handkerchief. (What does he want with his handkerchief?) I left it at the Club. (What Club?) O U R . . . did you find it? (Yes, no, you have n't told me at what Club.) I saw you there. It is n't like you, John. [The last time I saw G. was at the Players' Club in New York.—J. H.]

"Who's Rogets? [Phinuit tries to spell the real name.] (Spell that again.) [At the first attempt afterwards Phinuit leaves out a letter, then spells it correctly.] Rogers. (What do you want Rogers to get?) I want you to tell Rogers to get my handkerchief. I left it. He found it. Rogers has got a book of mine. (What is he going to do with it?)"

[Both Hart and G. P. knew Rogers, who at that time had a certain MS. book of G. P. in his possession. The book was found after G. P.'s death and given to Rogers to be edited. G. P. had promised during his lifetime that a particular disposition should be made of this book after his death. This action which G. P. living had contemplated with regard to the book was here, and in subsequent utterances which from their private nature I cannot quote, enjoined emphatically and repeatedly, and had it been at once carried out, as desired by G. P., much subsequent unhappiness and confusion might have been avoided. Neither Hart nor Rogers knows anything of the handkerchief incident.]

Then followed references to one or two other friends and many personal statements of a nature too private to be quoted. Hardly a single statement was made at this sitting which was not ac-

curate and relevant to the supposed personality of G. P. Hart, Hodgson tells us, was strongly impressed by the *vraisemblance* of the impersonation.[1]

On the 11th April, 1892, the sitters were Mr. and Mrs. Howard, two of G. P.'s most intimate friends. The statements made were of an intimately personal nature, and the whole proceedings were regarded by the Howards as thoroughly characteristic of their deceased friend. All the statements made, and all the references to individuals, were correct and relevant. The following are extracts from Mr. Howard's notes taken during the sitting. The sitter's remarks are interpolated in parentheses.

G. P. : Jim, is that you ? Speak to me quick. I am not dead. Don't think me dead. I 'm awfully glad to see you. Can 't you see me ? Don't you hear me ? Give my love to my father and tell him I want to see him. I am happy here, and more so since I find I can communicate with you. I pity those people who can't speak. . . . I want you to know I think of you still. I spoke to John about some letters. I left things terribly mixed, my books and my papers ; you will forgive me for this, won't you ? . , .

What is Rogers writing ?

(A novel.)

No, not that. Is he not writing something about me ?

(Yes, he is preparing a memorial of you.)

That is nice ; it is pleasant to be remembered. It is very kind of him. He was always kind to me when I was alive. Martha Rogers [deceased daughter] is here. I have talked with her several times. She reflects too much on her last illness, on being fed with a tube. We tell her she ought to

[1] *Proceedings*, S. P. R., vol. xiii., p. 297.

forget it, and she has done so in good measure, but she was ill a long time. She is a dear little creature when you know her, but she is hard to know. She is a beautiful little soul. She sends her love to her father. . . .

Berwick, how is he? Give him my love. He is a good fellow; he is what I always thought him in life, trustworthy and honourable. How is Orenberg? He has some of my letters. Give him my warmest love. He was always very fond of me, though he understood me least of all my friends. We fellows who are eccentric are always misunderstood in life. I used to have fits of depression. I have none now. I am happy now. I want my father to know about this. We used to talk about spiritual things, but he will be hard to convince. My mother will be easier. . . .[1]

In brief, between twenty and thirty persons who were friends of G. P. in life had sittings with Mrs. Piper, at which communications were given, purporting to come from the deceased. Most of these communications were accurate, relevant, and characteristic; many of them were of a kind too intimately personal for publication. On more than one occasion incidents which had taken place at a distance, unknown to any one in the room, were described with approximate correctness. References were constantly made to G. P.'s affairs, his manuscripts, and personal effects, which betrayed an intimate acquaintance with his own concerns and those of his friends. Many long conversations, partly by writing, and partly by voice, were held with Dr. Hodgson and other persons known to G. P.; and throughout the trance-intelligence showed an individual personality—a personality,

[1] *Proceedings*, S. P. R., vol. xiii., pp. 300, 301.

moreover, which was regarded by his friends as resembling that of the deceased G. P. Many of these friends were convinced that they had been conversing with George Pelham himself. One of the most striking proofs of identity is this. As said, between twenty and thirty friends of G. P. visited Mrs. Piper, all under assumed names. In no case did G. P. fail to recognise them, and to recognise them with the appropriate emotional or intellectual relations. In no case did he make a mistake, and claim acquaintance with a stranger.

During the years 1892–97 other communicators took control and furnished proofs of identity, some of them of an impressive kind. Of late years, however, the communications appear to have fallen off considerably in clearness and relevance. In 1898–1899 a series of sittings were held at which Mr. Hyslop, father of Professor J. H. Hyslop, was the professed communicator. A full record of these, together with an exhaustive commentary, is published as Vol. XVI. of the *Proceedings*, S. P. R. Taken as a whole they appear to contain, together with much that is irrelevant or inaccurate, so few correct and pertinent statements on matters not conceivably within the knowledge of the medium, that, in my own judgment, it would be difficult to extract from them evidence of value even for telepathy from living minds. The late Dr. Hodgson, however, attached some value to them, and Professor Hyslop himself is satisfied that he has

actually been in communication with his father.[1]

The sittings with Mrs. Piper since 1900 have been—with few exceptions—equally unproductive. The control of the entranced organism has been taken over by a band of spirits, Imperator, Rector, Prudens, etc., who proclaim themselves to be the same who directed the mediumship of the late Stainton Moses. Stainton Moses, a clergyman of the Church of England, and English Master at University College School, was perhaps the most remarkable private medium of the last generation. Of his trance utterances I have already spoken. They contain no evidence of supernormal faculty. He was also a physical medium, but he performed only in a small circle of intimate friends, and the evidence for the supernormal powers claimed by him rests entirely on the conviction entertained by these friends of the medium's honesty. No precautions against trickery were taken, and if trickery were practised, it is not likely that it would have been detected.[2] It cannot be said, therefore, that the migration of Imperator and his associates from Stainton Moses to Mrs. Piper is calculated to strengthen the presumption of spirit-communication.

But the whole subject is surrounded with diffi-

[1] The reader who has leisure and patience may possibly care to peruse the voluminous record and form his own opinion as to its merits. But he is advised first to read Dr. Hodgson's Report in *Proceedings*, vol. xiii., which gives the case of Mrs. Piper at its best.

[2] I have discussed at length the case of Mr. Stainton Moses in my *Modern Spiritualism*, vol. ii., pp. 276–88.

culties and perplexities. Even G. P. has on more than one occasion evaded test questions put to him, and has evaded them under circumstances which suggest disingenuousness. Imperator, Rector, Prudens, etc., represent personages of some importance in their day upon earth. Their real names were revealed by Stainton Moses to one or two persons still living. Through Mrs. Piper's organism they have more than once professed as a proof of identity to give their names; but their guesses have been incorrect. Several persons have within the last few years left behind them sealed letters, containing some statement known only to themselves, in order that revelation of the contents through a medium might furnish proof of the writer's survival. In no case has the test been complied with. In at least two instances (the medium in one case being Mrs. Piper, and in the other Mrs. Verrall) statements have been made purporting to indicate the contents of such a letter, which have proved, when the letter was opened, to be entirely wide of the mark.[1] During the past year some sittings have been held with Mrs. Piper in England at which some communications of interest have been received. But the full report of the results is not yet ripe for publication.

The investigation into these trance phenomena will, we hope, be continued whenever opportunity

[1] A full account of a case in which a test of this kind is said to have been fulfilled will be found in *Proceedings*, S. P. R., viii., p. 243. But the account was not written until many years after the event.

offers itself. From the results so far attained no certain conclusion seems possible. On the one hand, it seems clear that the trance consciousness of Mrs. Piper, as of all other so-called mediums, is apt on very small provocation to personify itself, and that the personification may be shaped by the suggestions of those present. In Mrs. Piper's case we have ground for assuming that such suggestions may often be conveyed telepathically; in short, that the dramatic personalities of the so-called controls may actually be built up out of the material unconsciously supplied by the sitters, and that the intimate personal details revealed in the trance utterances may be telepathically filched from the same source. The limitations of the knowledge displayed, and the occasional disingenuousness, forbid us to accept these communications as authentic and unembarrassed messages from the dead.

On the other hand, the remarkable freedom of the communications at some of the G. P. séances, and the occasional references to matters apparently outside the knowledge of the sitter, suggest that in certain cases, at any rate, we may come somehow into contact with the minds of the dead. Mrs. Sidgwick has suggested[1] that possibly there may be communication with the dead, through the channel of the sitter's mind; that Mrs. Piper may receive telepathically such messages, as she apparently receives the impression of other contents of her

[1] *Proceedings*, S. P. R., vol. xv., p. 37.

visitors' minds, and reflect them back through her automatic speech or writing.

Some such hypothesis would seem to be adequate to cover the known facts. But at the present stage of the investigation it must remain an open question whether an hypothesis which involves in any form telepathy from the dead is really required.

CHAPTER XIV

ON CLAIRVOYANCE AND PREVISION

TELEPATHY, as we have seen, furnishes a key which will unlock many things hitherto occult. But not all doors can thus be opened. There are incidents reported by competent witnesses which would seem to point to other unrecognised faculties of acquiring knowledge beyond the scope of the normal senses. Provisionally the chief of these hypothetical faculties have been named Clairvoyance, and Prevision or Precognition. The proof of such faculties, however, is on an entirely different footing from the proof of telepathy. We have seen that the hypothesis of the transmission of ideas from one brain to another by means of ethereal vibrations presents, so far as we can see, no insuperable difficulty. Moreover, if such a faculty should be proved to exist, we could understand how it might have been called into being by the pressure of the environment to meet the needs of an earlier stage in human, perhaps even in animal history. We should see in it the last traces of a faculty which rose before the birth of speech, and is already passing below the human horizon, at

all events, now that its work is done. In other words, if the theory of telepathy were accepted, it would not necessarily carry us beyond the boundaries of the known. In its physical aspect, it would be but one more effect of ethereal vibrations; historically, we should rank it as a vestigial faculty, reminding us, like the prehensile powers of the newly born infant, of a time when man was in the making.

But clairvoyance and prevision, the postulated faculties of seeing without the intermediation of any definite sense organ, and of foreseeing events yet to come, could not apparently be explained by any conceivable extension of physical laws. Nor could the existence of such faculties be accounted for by any process of terrestrial evolution. It is on the supposed existence of these superterrestrial modes of acquiring knowledge, that the late F. W. H. Myers has founded a cogent argument for immortality. As we have seen in the last two chapters, recent psychology tends to show that consciousness in the last analysis is but the transitory co-ordination of countless ill-defined and variable factors; and the study of hypnotism and hysteria has only served to deepen our sense of the inadequacy of this surface consciousness, and to reveal the possibility of other combinations amongst its shifting elements.

Myers accepted to the full the results of recent research. He recognised that the human consciousness, as we know it, is a highly composite and

unstable thing, having neither completeness nor essential unity. It is in short, to employ his favourite simile, like the visible spectrum, a selection —accidental, interrupted, and variable—from a larger whole. But at this point Myers's view diverges from those of the recognised schools. To him the surface consciousness, the only thing which we know as consciousness in ordinary life, is comparatively unimportant. "I accord no primacy," he writes, "to my ordinary waking self, except that among my potential selves this one has shown itself the fittest to meet the needs of common life." It is the hidden life which counts—the self which the struggle of the market-place and the senate has thrust back into the darkness, or has not yet called into conscious activity. "Each of us," he continues, "is in reality an abiding psychical entity far more extensive than he knows—an individuality which can never express itself completely through any corporeal manifestation. . . . All this [unexpressed] psychical action is conscious, all is included in an actual or potential memory below the threshold of our habitual consciousness."[1]

Again, the student of the laboratory or the asylum teaches that the rays omitted from the psychical spectrum are merely the ultra-red rays, the representatives of organic activities, of obscure bodily sensations, and possibly of primitive modes of perception which in the long ascent from the ascidian have been crowded out from

[1] *Proceedings*, S. P. R., vol. vii., pp. 301, 305.

the waking consciousness, at any rate, of civilised man. But Myers claimed that the analysis of the orthodox school is defective and that a more resolute search would find traces, beyond the violet end of our soul's spectrum, of other faculties and modes of perception, "which this material or planetary life could not have called into being, and whose exercise even here and now involves and necessitates the existence of a spiritual world."

Amongst these dormant faculties, which we yet cannot reckon as vestigial, are the exceptional powers exhibited by some hypnotic subjects of subconsciously reckoning with precision long periods of time, and the remarkable feats of calculating boys. For at what point of man's upward progress, Myers would ask, could it have profited him to possess a psychic alarum of this kind? or how could it have nerved the arm of the cave-dweller to be able to extract cube-roots, or reckon out logarithms at sight? Telepathy also, to Myers and those who think with him, seems to point to a wider plane of existence, and a spiritual as opposed to a merely terrestial process of evolution. But it is in its equipment with the transcendental faculties referred to at the beginning of this chapter that the strongest proof of the extra-planetary affinities of the human soul will naturally be sought. It is important therefore to examine carefully the basis upon which the assumption of the existence of these faculties depends.

The earlier students of Mesmerism or "Animal

Magnetism" in this and other European countries believed that certain of their subjects possessed the power of vision without the use of the eyes. Sometimes the power of vision was believed to be transferred to some other part of the body—the pit of the stomach, the fingers, or the back of the head. Sometimes it had no apparent relation to the bodily organism, but was thought to be exercised by the soul itself, released for a time from the prisoning flesh. It was the supposed clairvoyance at close quarters, however, which first attracted attention. The Commission appointed by the Royal Academy of Medicine at Paris, which presented their report on the phenomena of Animal Magnetism in 1831, stated that they had found certain subjects who in the magnetic trance could distinguish objects placed before them when their eyes were fast closed and normal vision was impossible. During the next thirty years many exponents of this supposed faculty gave public exhibitions, especially in this country and in France. Some careful experiments with a view to test the reality of the alleged faculty were made by the Rev. C. H. Townshend in 1840–50. Townshend convinced himself that certain mesmerised persons could see objects placed outside the range of vision. Indeed, as described, it seems impossible to account for some of his results by the exercise of the normal senses. In most of the experiments it was found necessary for the object to be held in front of the eyes, which were, however, so bandaged as to make it impossi-

ble, in the view of the experimenters, for the subject to see anything. It was found, however, that a variation in the angle at which the object was held, the addition of a further covering to the head, or the interposition of a screen, interfered with success. It is quite clear therefore that in these cases—as indeed in nearly all those hitherto reported by careful observers—the supposed power of "clairvoyance" had some relation to the normal organs of vision. Moreover the experience of the investigators of the Society for Psychical Research has led them to the conclusion that there is no method of bandaging the eyes, without risk of injury to those organs, which will effectually preclude normal vision. We gained our most instructive lesson with a subject named Dick, a pit lad. Dick, who had given successful exhibitions of his powers on platforms in the North of England, was brought to us in 1884 for examination. The method of bandaging practised by his manager was as follows: a penny was placed over each eye, ostensibly to protect the organ from sticking-plaster, strips of which were applied copiously over the orbits and the surrounding features. A handkerchief was then tied tightly over all. Under these conditions Dick correctly described objects held in front of him at a considerable distance. The bandaging seemed to be effective and normal vision appeared impossible. It was observed, however, that Dick was most successful when the objects were held directly in front, and a little above the level of the

eyes. A variation in the position frequently led to the failure of the experiment. Further the experiment would fail if the bandages were placed above the level of the eyebrows. Eventually, after repeated trials, Dr. Hodgson succeeded, under the same conditions of bandaging, in seeing, though fitfully and imperfectly, objects held in a corresponding position. The channel of vision was a small chink in the sticking-plaster on the line where it was fastened to the brow. Possibly with Dick vision under these conditions may have been rendered easier by some degree of visual hyperæsthesia. His trance seemed to be genuine.[1] In short, until we can find a subject who can see an object through an opaque screen or inside a closed box, we need not seriously consider this kind of clairvoyance.

But the suggested conditions are alleged to have been complied with in two well-known cases—those of Alexis Didier and of Major Buckley's subjects. And as both cases have been cited of recent years by distinguished writers[2] as proofs of clairvoyance, it seems necessary to consider their claims. Notwithstanding the testimony of Robert Houdin, who witnessed the performance, and professed himself quite unable to discover any trickery, it seems unnecessary to consider that part of Alexis'

[1] *Journal*, S. P. R., vol. i., p. 84.

[2] Dr. A. R. Wallace in *Proceedings* S.P.R., vol. xiv., p. 373, has claimed genuine powers of clairvoyance for Alexis Didier. Mr. Myers (*Human Personality*, vol. i., pp. 556–8), has quoted some of Major Buckley's experiments.

"clairvoyance" which was undertaken with eyes bandaged. Alexis, as we know from contemporary accounts, was very particular as to the arrangement of the bandages, and frequently fidgeted with them. In any case, bandaging the eyes, as already said, is a fallacious test. But Alexis did more than play cards or read books with eyes bandaged. We are told that he frequently described the contents of sealed packets, which had been specially prepared beforehand as a test of his powers. Accounts of this marvel are fairly numerous, and the witnesses, whose names are given, were frequently persons whose position removed them from all suspicion of collusion. If we regard their evidence as insufficient to prove clairvoyance, it is on quite other grounds. Briefly, Alexis was a professional medium, who received large sums for his services; he had a probable confederate in his business manager, Marcillet; the séances were not conducted under conditions favourable to exact observation—the room would be thronged with people, twenty or thirty at a time; Alexis could not satisfy all the tests propounded to him, and no doubt selected those which gave him his opportunity. Lastly, the accounts of the experiments which have come down to us are hasty and incomplete; we probably have in no case a full report of what took place. But by comparing reports by different observers of the same experiment, we find in one or two cases that the contents of the sealed packet could not be described when first presented. The secret would

only be revealed after the packet had been opened in another room and the contents shown to a sympathetic bystander. Apart from the danger of collusion, it is obvious that this procedure offered opportunity for the prying eyes of M. Marcillet. On the whole, we are forced to the conclusion, that Alexis' performances so closely resembled conjuring tricks, and took place under conditions so little favourable for exact experiment, that we should not be justified in citing them as evidence for clairvoyance.[1]

The case of Major Buckley's clairvoyants is much simpler. Major Buckley was an elderly gentleman, a retired officer of the Indian Army, who prided himself on his remarkable powers as a mesmerist. Amongst his pet subjects were several young women who developed remarkable powers of clairvoyance. Their specialty—and it is remarkable that this particular power, though exhibited by many of Major Buckley's subjects, has not, as far as I know, been claimed in any other case—consisted in reading the mottoes in nuts purchased at the confectioner's, hazel nuts or walnuts, the natural contents of which had been replaced by sweetmeats and a piece of paper bearing a motto. From reports given in the *Zoist*, by Ashburner and others, it is not difficult to see how the feat was accomplished. The young women had apparently brought with them nuts which they had previously opened and resealed, and they contrived during the proceedings to sub-

[1] See my *Modern Spiritualism*, vol. i., pp. 143–7.

stitute these prepared nuts for those brought by the investigators. When the nuts were marked, so as to prevent substitution, the young ladies pleaded headache and the experiments proved inconclusive.[1]

On the whole we are bound to conclude that the evidence for the alleged power of clairvoyance at close quarters is quite insufficient. The case, however, for what the older mesmerists styled "travelling clairvoyance" is very much stronger, though the hypothesis implied by that term, viz., that the soul of the entranced subject left the body and actually visited the scene which he described, is of course gratuitous. The locality "visited" was generally the home of one of the experimenters, selected as being at a distance and unknown to the clairvoyant. So far as the details given by the sleeper were known to the experimenter, telepathy from his mind would be sufficient to account for the results. In the rarer cases, when details would be given of the scene taking place at the moment

[1] See *Zoist*, vol. vi., pp. 98–110 and 380–4. The latest case of clairvoyance at close quarters has broken down like all the rest. In 1896, Dr. Ferroul, Mayor of Narbonne,—who has lately risen to fame in another field of action,—reported in the *Annales des Sciences Psychiques* the success of some experiments in reading the contents of closed envelopes. In the following year Professor Grasset made up a sealed envelope and sent it to Dr. Ferroul's subject. The contents were correctly read, and Professor Grasset could not ascertain that the envelope had been tampered with in any way. Subsequently, at his request, the Académie des Sciences et Lettres of Montpellier apppointed a committee to investigate the matter. Their report leaves no room to doubt that the results were achieved by deliberate fraud. (See *Annales des Sciences Psychiques*, May-June and July-August, 1896; November-December, 1897; January-February, 1898. Also *Semaine Médicale*, 1898, pp. 18–20, and *Proceedings*, S.P.R., xiv., pp. 115–118.)

of the experiment and unknown to any of those present in the room with the sleeper, the operation of telepathy from a distance is still not excluded. We should clearly not be justified in attributing a power of independent vision to the clairvoyant. The following example will serve to illustrate the type.

The narrative, written by Dr. Alfredo Barcellos, was communicated to us by Professor Alexander, of Rio de Janeiro, who has himself investigated the circumstance.

No. 72

[The incident occurred on the 19th of March, 1895, and the account was sent to us on the 29th December, 1896. Dr. Barcellos had just visited a patient, Donna X., who was convalescing from pleurisy on the left side. The recovery was retarded by severe anæmia, from which, however, no danger was apprehended. From Donna X.'s house Dr. Barcellos went direct to the house of Donna G., another patient whom he was treating by means of hypnotism. On this occasion Donna G. after passing into the trance] "suddenly became grave—frowned as if engaged in some effort of thought (*como pensativa e preoccupada*), and with that vivid presentation that characterises somnambules, uttered, in substance, the following words, which made a profound impression on my memory: 'Dr. Barcellos, that patient of yours is dying. Poor thing!—See the children weeping round her. Look—there goes a messenger in all haste to your house to call you. This is what she said:' (Here G. tried to imitate the faint tones of a person *in articulo mortis*)—'"Help me, Dr. Barcellos, I am dying!"' (Returning to her natural voice) 'Poor thing!—a stout woman, too—and to say that stoutness is a sign of health. It is useless, doctor—she is dead!' As at that time the person I had just visited was [G. excepted] my only

female patient, I supposed, on hearing these words, that the reference must be to her, and I therefore said to G., 'Examine the dying woman. See what she is dying of'; to which the somnambule, after [another] effort of thought, replied, 'She has an obstruction in her chest on the left side; but it is not that that is killing her, doctor. What is killing her is her state of profound anæmia. It may be said that this woman's blood has been changed to water in her veins. She is dead!'"

In fact Donna X. had died, as stated, and a messenger had been dispatched to summon a doctor. Dr. Barcellos on his way to the house met Dr. Dias, who had just come from thence, and Dr. Dias testifies that Dr. Barcellos was able to tell him that Donna X. was already dead.[1]

We find a few instances of "clairvoyance" of this kind recorded as occurring during severe illness. Dr. Sutphin, of Glasgow, Kentucky, has given an account of two cases occurring in his practice in which typhoid fever patients saw events taking place at a distance. The vision in one case represented a detailed picture of a distant scene and the actors in it.[2]

It is perhaps hardly necessary to point out that the finding of lost objects through indications given in dreams, in the crystal, or though planchette cannot be attributed to clairvoyance. In most cases the revival of a lost memory on the part of the actual seer will explain the fact. More rarely, we have to assume that the seer is enabled to reach telepathically the subliminal memory of another.

[1] *Journal*, S. P. R., July, 1897.
[2] *Ibid*, June, 1896.

This seems the simplest explanation of a remarkable incident reported to the Society by Sir Harry and Lady Vane. Lady Vane had lost a notebook, and had had the whole house searched for it. Some weeks later meeting Lady Mabel Howard, who has received many veridical messages through automatic writing, Lady Vane asked her to find out where the book was. Lady Mabel's pencil wrote that the book would be found in a locked cupboard in the bookcase, at the tapestry end of the room, and after a further close search the book was actually found in the place indicated concealed in a scrapbook. This particular cupboard had already been searched on more than one occasion.[1]

There are, however, a few cases reported of dreams picturing the scene of a burglary, or other event, in which it is difficult, with any plausibility, to invoke human agency. The following case will serve to illustrate the point.

No. 73. From Miss Busk[2]

"16 Montague Place, W., 1884.

"I dreamt that I was walking in a wood in my father's place in Kent, in a spot well-known to me, where there was sand under the firs; I stumbled over some objects, which proved to be heads, left protruding, of some ducks buried in the sand. The idea impressed me as so comical that I fortunately mentioned it at breakfast next morning, and one of two persons remember that I did so. Only an hour later it happened that the old bailiff of the place came up for some instructions unexpectedly, and as he was leaving he said he must tell us a strange thing that had happened. There had

[1] *Proceedings*, S. P. R., vol. xi., p. 395.

[2] *Phantasms of the Living*, vol. i., p. 369.

been a robbery in the farmyard, and some stolen ducks had been found buried in the sand, with their heads protruding, in the very spot where I had seen the same. The farm was underlet, and I had not even any interest in the ducks to carry my thoughts towards them under the nefarious treatment they received.

"R. H. Busk."

Miss Busk's sister, Mrs. Pitt Byrne, who was present when this dream was told, corroborates as follows:

"I distinctly remember, and have often since spoken of, the circumstance of Miss R. H. Busk's relating to me her dream of ducks buried in the wood, before the bailiff who reported the incident came up to town.

"J. Pitt Byrne."

Impressions of this type are, however, very rare, and their occurrence is reported, so far as I am aware, only in dreams. It would not be safe, therefore, to build any hypothesis on such slender support. Moreover, improbable though the conception may appear of a malefactor revealing telepathically his own misdeed to any of those concerned, the remarkable dream connected with the death of W. Terriss, which is given below, would certainly seem to indicate such a possibility.

The evidence for precognition is at first sight, perhaps, more impressive than that for clairvoyance. But a little consideration will show us that it is as yet wholly inadequate to justify the tremendous assumptions implied in the hypothesis of foreknowledge of the future. Telepathy, as already indicated, does not seem necessarily to

involve more than a slight enlargement of the physical scheme of the universe—just the addition of a new mode of force operating by means already sufficiently familiar. But foreknowledge of the future, of the detailed kind indicated in some of the narratives forwarded to us, would involve the shattering of the whole scientific fabric. If the things reported in some of these narratives really happened we must set to work to construct a new heavens and a new earth. But the hypothesis of telepathy, as already shown, rests primarily upon rigid experiment ; the spontaneous instances furnish subsidiary support, but are in themselves hardly sufficient to justify the theory. Now the hypothesis of prevision derives no support from experiment ; it rests entirely on the testimony of witnesses who rarely have any claim to be regarded as expert observers. And the impressions by which foreknowledge of the future seems to be conveyed are mostly dreams—that is, they belong to a class of impressions which we have already recognised as being evidentially so weak as to give but dubious support to telepathy.

It is scarcely necessary to repeat what has been said in a previous chapter as to the inherent defects of dream evidence. But as the "prophetic" dream often does not meet with its fulfilment until weeks or months later, it is clear that there is greater risk even than in the cases already considered of the dream being reshaped in memory to fit the event.

As Gurney has put it:

"When the actual facts are learnt a faint amount of resemblance may often suggest a past dream, and set the mind on the track of trying accurately to recall it. This very act involves a search for detail, for something tangible and distinct; and the real features and definite incidents which are now present to the mind, in close association with some definite scene or fact which actually figured in the dream, will be apt to be unconsciously read back into the dream . . . dreams in this way resemble objects seen in the dusk ; which begin by puzzling the eye, but which when once we know or think we know what they are, seem quite unmistakable and even full of familiar detail."[1]

Nor have we in most of these "prophetic" dreams the kind of certificate which we were enabled to produce in several of the dreams quoted in Chapter IV.—the evidence of contemporary documents. In comparatively few cases does it appear that any note of the "prophetic" dream was made before the fulfilment.

If we consider only those "prophetic" dreams which are attested by contemporary documents, or in which there is other satisfactory evidence that the experience has been correctly reported, we shall find that in many cases the facts admit of some other explanation than foreknowledge of the future. Thus, we have several cases in which the winner of the Derby or some other race was revealed in a dream; or in which the position of a candidate in some important examination was accurately foreseen. Professor G. Hulin, of the

[1] *Phantasms*, vol. i., p. 298.

University of Ghent, has communicated to us five instances, all occurring within a few years, apparently in the same district of Belgium, in which young men had dreamt beforehand of the actual number which they would draw for conscription, and had announced the number, before the drawing, to the presiding officer. The facts in each case are certified by the *commissaire d' arrondissement*, who was himself the presiding officer on at least two of the occasions referred to.[1] Cases of this kind are certainly much more remarkable than dreams of the winning horse, because the numbers concerned are much larger (the highest number in the urn in one case is given as 223), and the results are of course quite incalculable. It is not difficult to suppose, in the case of the lottery or the horse race, that the fears and hopes centred on the issue breed dreams so numerous that here and there one must in the long run coincide with the event, while those which remain fruitless soon pass away and leave no trace in the memory. Possibly dreams of the number drawn for conscription—since the event would affect the dreamer more nearly than the result of a race or lottery—are even more common. In the only case given by Professor Hulin in detail, the dream took place two months beforehand, and the lad had been for months previously in great anxiety as to the issue. Further it is to be noted

[1] *Journal*, S.P.R., October, 1894. It is not clear from the account that M. Van Dooren, the *commissaire*, testifies of his own knowledge to the three cases occurring in 1893 and 1894.

that in all five cases the number dreamt of was a high, *i.e.*, a favourable one, and the dream no doubt would win more credence because of its good augury. But it is not quite so easy to be satisfied that the dreams last noted—of which three are reported as occurring in the same village, Eecloo, in the course of less than ten years—were due wholly to chance. It would certainly appear that there is a case for further enquiry here.[1]

We have a few cases of correct predictions made by professional mediums.[2] But here again, in view of the large number of predictions made under similar circumstances which are not fulfilled and are forgotten, it would be unsafe at present to count too highly the few shots which hit the mark.

We have numerous cases reported to us of unusual sights or sounds—animals, corpse-lights, Banshees, the death-watch—preceding a death. But the evidence in these cases is in its present state quite insufficient to establish any connection. One obvious defect in the symbolic dream or omen is that there is no intrinsic relation between the event and its symbol. Our own ancestors saw a connection between comets and disasters; and

[1] Even if the facts are admitted in these cases to be beyond the scope of chance, foreknowledge of the future, as Mr. Myers points out (*Proceedings*, S.P.R., xi., p. 547), is not necessarily involved. The guidance of a higher intelligence, gifted with clairvoyant powers, which should direct the dreamer's hand to the appointed number, would be a less incredible assumption. But until we have further information on such cases, it would be premature to pursue the speculation.

[2] A striking case will be found in *Journal*, S.P.R., March, 1901.

the modern Celt believes will-o'-the-wisp lights to betoken death. *Prima facie*, the one belief has as much to say for itself as the other. There is a natural tendency to believe that an unusual occurrence, anything out of the ordinary routine of life, is to be construed as a portent. Hence the almost universal belief, at a certain stage of civilisation, in omens. Clearly, to establish a connection between an unusual sight or sound and a subsequent event (most commonly a death) we need a long series of coincidences. But in the symbolic prophecies before us we have no unimpeachable record to attest such a series of coincidences. We are forced to rely upon fallible memories, for the most part unsupported by documents. In other words, we have little security that the "misses" have been recorded as well as the "hits." And this forgetfulness of the unfulfilled omen is especially likely to occur with persons of the peasant class, who form the bulk of our witnesses for symbolic hallucinations; and, again, is specially liable to affect dreams, the form of symbolism for which we have most educated testimony. Yet another defect of this class of evidence is that no definite term is fixed for the fulfilment of the omen. This, indeed, is a defect common to prophetic intimations in general, but is peculiarly noticeable in this class. The death may follow the corpse-lights by two or three days; but the omen may fulfil itself unquestioned in months or years. Again, there is the vagueness of the event foreshadowed. The omen may point to

a mother or son. But some of our seers are contented with the death, after an interval of weeks, of a step-grandmother, an uncle by marriage, or even a mere acquaintance.

One case may perhaps be quoted, as illustrative of the kind of evidence which is required to make reports of vague occurrences of this kind worthy of serious consideration.

No. 74. From Mrs. Verrall[1]

"5 Selwyn Gardens, Cambridge,
"[Tuesday] September 20th, 1898, 3 P.M.

"Dear Mr. Myers:

"Just a line for the stamp of the post—in case anything has 'occurred'—to say that this afternoon, at 2.30, I heard the curious ticking which I think I have mentioned to you. It comes usually, if not always, when I am lying down, and may be due to some physical cause; but it has at least once been associated with the illness of a friend, so I make a point of noting it, and I suppose the stamp of the post is desirable.

"But *absit omen!*

"M. de G. Verrall."

Mr. Myers noted on this letter: "Received September 20th, 1898, 8.30 P.M."

The omen was "fulfilled" on the following day. Mrs. Verrall's sister, landing from the steamer at Ouistreham, between ten and eleven P.M., on the 21st, made a false step and plunged into the water of the harbour. She was rescued by the boatswain, who heard the splash, and suffered no serious ill effects. But no one had seen her fall, there

[1] *Journal*, S.P.R., November, 1899, p. 135.

was imminent risk of being drawn under the ship, and her life was for a few moments in great danger.

On another occasion Mrs. Verrall noted down the occurrence of the ticking, and subsequently found that the time coincided with the commencement of the serious illness of an intimate friend. On the only two other occasions on which Mrs. Verrall has heard the ticking, it seemed to have a premonitory significance.

It may be hoped that, as attention is increasingly called to the subject, careful records like that last quoted may be multiplied, so that it may ultimately be found possible to estimate the real significance of these omens.

There is another class of predictions, the existence of which seems to be well established. The early Magnetists have put on record that some of their somnambules could accurately foretell the approach of disease in their own persons; could forecast the course of the disease, predict the occurrence of crises, and indicate the date of recovery. More rarely this power of prediction extended to the ailments of others. Recent observations have confirmed the accuracy of these early reports in both respects. Several cases have been reported to us in which persons have predicted serious illness or death to themselves. For an instance, see the case recorded by the Rev. A. T. Fryer, in which a lady, the wife of a clergyman, had a warning in a dream of a serious illness and her eventual

recovery. The illness—blood-poisoning—in fact came on the day following the dream.[1]

In a case recorded by Mr. Glardon, his aunt, Mme. J. O. predicted early in August that her death would take place in six weeks. Mr. Glardon sent us a note of the prediction before the death was known, intimating that the period would expire on the 15th of September. As a matter of fact, the lady died on the 14th.[2]

These predictions occur, almost invariably, in trance or dreams, and the circumstances would seem occasionally to indicate that the subject of them is able, in the enlarged and more primitive stage of consciousness existing in those states, to perceive the latent presence of disease and the workings of organic processes, in himself or in others, which are hidden from the work-a-day self. More generally, however, the explanation is of a simpler kind. The prophecy is made to work out its own fulfilment; the seer sets his organism subconsciously to explode in a predestined crisis, or to emerge in sanity from a self-imposed period of ill health.

Speaking generally this particular class of cases points at most to the vestiges of a lost power of forecasting or guiding organic processes, rather than to the rudiments of a new faculty transcending human limitations.[3]

[1] *Journal*, S.P.R., January, 1906.

[2] *Proceedings*, S.P.R., vol. xi., p. 431.

[3] Dr. Liébeault has sent us his notes of a curious case. On the 26th December, 1879, M. C—— consulted a "Necromancer" in Paris, who told

There are one or two striking cases, at first glance apparently prophetic, which again suggest another explanation. Mrs. McAlpine, who has had several telepathic experiences, has given us the following account of a vision which took place in June, 1889.

No. 75. From Mrs. McAlpine[1]

'Garscadden, Bearsden, Glasgow, April 20th, 1892.

[Whilst waiting for a train at Castleblaney, Mrs. McAlpine wandered by the side of a lake.] "Being at length tired, I sat down to rest upon a rock at the edge of the water. My attention was quite taken up with the extreme beauty of the scene before me. There was not a sound or movement, except the soft ripple of the water on the sand at my feet. Presently I felt a cold chill creep through me, and a curious stiffness of my limbs, as if I *could* not move, though wishing to do so. I felt frightened, yet chained to the spot, and as if impelled to stare at the water straight in front of me. Gradually a black cloud seemed to rise, and in the midst of it I saw a tall man, in a suit of tweed, jump into the water and sink.

"In a moment the darkness was gone, and I again became sensible of the heat and sunshine, but I was awed and felt 'eerie.'"

A few days later a man, a clerk in a bank, actually committed suicide in this very piece of water.

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him, amongst other predictions, which were eventually fulfilled, that he would die at twenty-six. He was then nineteen. The young man came in January, 1886, to consult Dr. Liébeault, who made a note of the prediction. In fact M. C—— died in September of the same year, when still not twenty-seven. The young man was under treatment at the time for biliary calculi; and the cause of death was peritonitis, consequent on an internal rupture. It is difficult to suppose, therefore, that the prediction in this case wrought its own fulfilment or that the cause of death could have been foreseen normally seven years before. (*Proceedings* S.P.R., vol. xi., p. 528.)

[1] *Proceedings*, S. P. R., vol. x., p. 332.

Mrs. McAlpine's sister has a dim recollection of being told of the vision before the occurrence of the tragedy.

With this may be compared another vision foreshadowing a tragedy. It will be remembered that William Terriss, the actor, was stabbed at the entrance to the Adelphi Theatre, by a discharged member of the company who fancied that he had a grievance against him. The murder took place at 7.20 P. M. on the 16th December, 1897. On the same evening a member of the company, Miss H——, told some friends of mine of the murder, and of the dream told to her by Mr. Lane. Four days later I saw Mr. Lane, who had been acting as understudy to Terriss, and obtained from him the following account.

No. 76. From Mr. Frederick Lane[1]

"Adelphi Theatre, December 20th, 1897.

"In the early morning of the 16th December, 1897, I dreamt that I saw the late Mr. Terriss lying in a state of delirium or unconsciousness on the stairs leading to the dressing-rooms in the Adelphi Theatre. He was surrounded by people engaged at the theatre, amongst whom were Miss Millward and one of the footmen who attend the curtain, both of whom I actually saw a few hours later at the death scene. His chest was bare and clothes torn aside. Everybody who was around him was trying to do something for his good. This dream was in the shape of a picture. I saw it like a tableau on which the curtain would rise and fall. I immediately after dreamt that we did not open at the Adelphi Theatre that evening. I was in my dressing-room in the dream, but this latter part was somewhat incoherent. The next morning on going down to the

[1] *Journal*, S. P. R., Feb., 1898, p. 195.

theatre for rehearsal the first member of the company I met was Miss H——, to whom I mentioned this dream. On arriving at the theatre I also mentioned it to several other members of the company, including Messrs. Creagh Henry, Buxton, Carter Bligh, &c. This dream, though it made such an impression upon me as to cause me to relate it to my fellow artists, did not give me the idea of any coming disaster. I may state that I have dreamt formerly of deaths of relatives and other matters which have impressed me, but the dreams have never impressed me sufficiently to make me repeat them the following morning, and have never been verified. My dream of the present occasion was the most vivid I have ever experienced, in fact, life-like, and exactly represented the scene as I saw it at night.

"Frederick Lane."

Mr. Lane explained to me that he was in the neighbourhood of the theatre when Mr. Terriss was stabbed and ran to the Charing Cross Hospital for a doctor; on his return he looked in at the private entrance, and saw Mr. Terriss lying on the stairs as in the dream.

Miss H—— writes as follows:

"Adelphi Theatre, [Saturday], 18th Dec., 1897.

"On Thursday morning about 12 o'clock I went into Rule's, Maiden Lane, and there found Mr. Lane with Mr. Wade. In the course of conversation after Mr. Wade had left, Mr. Lane said that he had had a curious dream the night before the effects of which he still felt. It was to this effect: he had seen Terriss on the stairs inside the Maiden Lane door (the spot where Terriss died) and that he was surrounded by a crowd of people, and that he was raving, but he (Mr. Lane) could n't exactly tell what was the matter. I remember laughing about this, and then we went to rehearsal."

Mr. Carter Bligh writes:

"4th Jan., 1898.

"I must apologise for delay in replying to your note. . . . I have much pleasure in being able to state that Mr. Fred Lane on the morning of the 16th ult. at rehearsal at the Adelphi Theatre told me among others in a jocular and chaffing way (*not believing in it for an instant*) how he probably would be called upon to play 'Captain Thomas' that night as he had dreamt that something serious had happened to Terriss. I forget now, and therefore do not attempt to repeat, the exact words Mr. Lane used as to the reason (in the dream) why Mr. Terriss would not appear that night, but I have a distinct recollection of him saying that he (Terriss) could not do so, because of his having dreamt that something had happened. It was all passed over very lightly in the same spirit in which it was given, *i. e.*, in the spirit of unbelieving banter."

Mr. Creagh Henry, another member of the company, wrote on the 20th January to say that on the morning of the 16th December he heard Mr. Lane relate a dream in which he had seen Mr. Terriss "upon the landing where he died, surrounded by several people who were supporting him in what appeared to be a fit."

It seems here that the dream-vision presented a fairly accurate and detailed picture of the event. The dream was not of a common type, and it is difficult to dismiss it as merely a chance-coincidence. But neither in this case nor in the one related by Mrs. McAlpine is it necessary to suppose that for the seer the veil of the future was momentarily lifted.

The lines of telepathic influence, as we have had

already occasion to observe, do not seem invariably to be marked out by kinship or affection. It would seem possible then that the chief actor in the tragedy, brooding in solitude, may have unawares communicated to some mind, which happened to be sensitive to its reception, the outline of the picture in which he embodied his desperate purpose. It is to be noted that the percipient in each case had some connection with the locality of the tragedy.

There are, however, a few well attested cases in which the coincidence seems too definite to be attributed to chance, while no other solution can apparently be suggested. Of the apparent references to future events contained in Mrs. Verrall's script I select the following:

No. 77. From Mrs. Verrall[1]

"On December 11th, 1901, the script wrote as follows:

"'Nothing too mean the trivial helps, gives confidence. Hence this. Frost and a candle in the dim light. Marmontel he was reading on a sofa or in bed—there was only a candle's light. She will surely remember this. The book was lent not his own—he talked about it.'

"Then, after a reference to a separate incident, recognised as such, there appeared a fanciful but unmistakable attempt at the name Sidgwick."

[Mrs. Verrall thought that "she" might refer to Mrs. Sidgwick, and wrote to ask whether the name Marmontel had any meaning for her. Mrs. Sidgwick replied in the negative, but suggested that it might possibly occur in some MSS. that she was reading.]

[1] *Proceedings*, S. P. R., vol. xx., pp. 331–333. See above, Chapter XIII., for some account of Mrs. Verrall's automatic writing.

"On the 17th Dec. the script wrote:

"'I wanted to write Marmontel is right. It was a French book, a[1] Memoir I think. Passy may help Souvenirs de Passy or Fleury. Marmontel was not on the cover—the book was bound and was lent—two volumes in old-fashioned binding and print. It is not in any papers—it is an attempt to make some one remember—an incident.'"

[Mrs. Verrall is not conscious of having heard of Marmontel's name until it was written in the script. A few weeks later she saw the name in a bookseller's catalogue. In January, 1902, she wrote to a friend, Mr. Marsh, to invite him for a week-end visit. He fixed March the 1st. This was the only communication she had had with him since June, 1901.]

"On March 1st Mr. Marsh arrived, and that evening at dinner he mentioned that he had been reading Marmontel. I asked if he had read the *Moral Tales*, and he replied that it was the *Memoirs*. I was interested in this reference to Marmontel, and asked Mr. Marsh for particulars about his reading, at the same time explaining the reasons for my curiosity. He then told me that he got the book from the London Library, and took the first volume only to Paris with him, where he read it on the evening of February 20th, and again on February 21st. On each occasion he read by the light of a candle, on the 20th he was in bed, on the 21st lying on two chairs. He talked about the book to the friends with whom he was staying in Paris. The weather was cold, but there was, he said, no frost. The London Library copy is bound, as most of their books are, not in modern binding, but the name 'Marmontel' is on the back of the volume. The edition has three volumes; in Paris Mr. Marsh had only one volume, but at the time of his visit to us he had read the second also.

"I asked him whether 'Passy' or 'Fleury' would 'help,' and he replied that Fleury's name certainly occurred in the book, in a note; he was not sure about Passy, but undertook to look it up on his return to town, and to ascertain, as he could by reference to the book, what part of the first volume

[1] Possibly "or."

he had been reading in Paris. He is in the habit of reading in bed, but has electric light in his bedroom at home, so that he had not read 'in bed or on a sofa by candle light' for months, till he read Marmontel in Paris.

"On his return to town Mr. Marsh wrote to me (March 4, 1902), that on February 21st, while lying on two chairs, he read a chapter in the first volume of Marmontel's *Memoirs* describing the finding at *Passy* of a panel, etc., connected with a story in which *Fleury* plays an important part.[1]

"It will thus be noted that the script in December, 1901, describes (as past) an incident which actually occurred two and a half months later, in February, 1902,—an incident which at the time of writing was not likely to have been foreseen by any one. I ascertained from Mr. Marsh that the idea of reading Marmontel occurred to him not long before his visit to Paris. It is probable that had he not seen me almost immediately upon his return, when his mind was full of the book, I should never have heard of his reading it, and therefore not have discovered the application of the script of December 16th and 17th."

The coincidences here are so numerous and definite that it is extremely difficult to attribute them to chance, and the difficulty is increased when we take into account the other instances of the same kind contained in Mrs. Verrall's script.

There remain, as already indicated, a considerable number of cases of dreams which seem to foreshadow in some detail future events, and for which no explanation can apparently be suggested. Of these narratives the two which follow are perhaps the best attested.

[1] Mrs. Verrall adds that, as far as she can discover, the names Passy and Fleury do not appear together in any passage except that read by Mr. Marsh on 21st February.

No. 78. From Colonel K. Coghill, C.B.

"April, 1894.

"A curious case occurred to me last month, though it may be but a coincidence not worth recounting. On 28th March I received a letter from a lady, with whom I had not been in correspondence for about a year, stating that on the 26th she had either a vision or dream (I forget the expression) that she saw me in a very dangerous position under a horse from which many people were trying to relieve me. By return of post I wrote that I thought it a dream which was proved by contraries, as nothing of the sort had occurred. That afternoon I received notice of a last 'off day' with our pack of hounds, and the next morning on my way to covert I posted my letter. At the finish of a long run in the afternoon, my horse, pulling double down a steep hill, was unable to collect himself for a big bank at the bottom of the hill, breasted it, and fell head over heels into a deep and broad drop ditch on the far side, with me underneath him. His head and shoulders were at the bottom, and legs remained up on the landing side of the ditch. Many of the field dismounted, and after some minutes pulled the horse away, and got me from under, more or less stunned, but little the worse, except a few face cuts, the loss of a tooth, and a crushed stirrup, and the horse with a few head cuts. The horse was about my best hunter and never before guilty of such a thing, though, of course, it may have been but a hunting-field coincidence."

The letter in which the lady in question, the Hon. Mrs. Leir Carleton, related her dream, is unfortunately lost, but Sir Joseph Coghill writes:

"Glen Barrabane, Castle Townsend,

"May 3rd, 1894.

"On the 29th March last, my brother, Colonel Coghill, showed me a portion of a letter just received from a lady, who wrote describing a dream or vision in which she saw him meet with a serious accident from a horse, and she noticed a crowd of persons assisting him away."

Colonel Coghill himself wrote by return of post, before the accident, as follows:

"28th March.

"My dear Mrs. Carleton: Need I say how delighted I was to see your handwriting this morning, and how happy I am that your dream has so far proved the rule of going by 'contraries,' for I never in my life was going stronger than I am at present."

On the 31st March Colonel Coghill wrote to Mrs. Carleton again:

"You win, hands down . . . had you lived earlier you might have been burned as a witch, for by your dream you foretold a grief to me, though in prospective. Yesterday [1] I enjoyed the imperial crowner which you saw in your dream, the hardest fall I have had for very many years. . . . Tableau — Six legs in the air. 2nd view — A man in the ditch, with horse on top of his (the man's) head. Here your dream fails, for instead of an unsympathetic crowd helping him, I was released by half a dozen friends, including the Master, and about as many ladies. 3rd Tableau—All their loose horses pursuing the hounds riderless.

"My first thought, when down, was your dream, and before my head was out of the mud, I said, 'At any rate, as I am to be led away by some one, the neck must be all right,' and so it was, and I got off very cheaply."

Mrs. Leir Carleton has informed us that from a child she has "had premonitions of illness: sometimes the illness proved trivial and sometimes fatal. I have no *distinct* impressions, coming events seem to cast shadows before them." [2]

[1] It may be noticed that there is a slight discrepancy here. According to Colonel Coghill's letter of April, the accident took place on the 29th March. Possibly his letter should have been dated 30th, not 31st, March.

[2] *Proceedings*, S. P. R., vol. xi., pp. 489–91.

The next case was procured for us by Professor Romaine Newbold, of the University of Pennsylvania.

No. 79. From Professor Romaine Newbold[1]

"Sedgwick, Maine, August 29th, 1900.

"This morning my wife and I reached this out-of-the-way nook, some forty miles by water, though I believe but twenty by land, from Bar Harbour, and a few hours after our arrival I got the details of a coincidence which I wish to record and send you at once.

"My wife's parents, Rev. and Mrs. Geo. T. Packard, and her brother Kent, aged 13½, have been spending the summer here. Kent met us on the wharf, and on the way up told me something about being 'chased by a white horse,' but I paid little attention to him. After dinner, while his mother and sister and I were talking over the happenings of the summer, Kent came into the room and said to his mother something—I did not catch the exact words—as to the dream he had some time ago about being chased by a white horse. Great excitement ensued, all began to talk at once. I scented something of value for the S.P.R., and succeeded in quieting the confusion. Then I made them tell their stories in due order and took them down in writing. From the notes which I then made I have written out the following account. It has been verified by the witnesses.

"(1) Mrs. Packard's recollections. (Kent heard her tell this, but was not allowed to comment on it.) At home in Boston, not long before they came down here, Kent one night had a severe nightmare. He began to scream, thrash about in the bed, and strike wildly in all directions. Mrs. P. tried to soothe him and finally got him awake. He said he had dreamed that a white horse was chasing him around a wharf. He was so excited that he slept but little more that night, waking and crying out at intervals. Mr. Packard was wakened

[1] *Journal*, S. P. R., February, 1901.

by the noise of the first attack, and Mrs. P. remembers going in and explaining to him the cause. She remembers no further details of the dream.

"(2) Ethel Packard Newbold remembers that she was told about the dream next morning, and that Kent at breakfast kept saying, 'Oh that white horse'; with expressive gestures of horror. (N.B.—This would fix the date as falling between May 28th, when E. P. N. went to Boston, and June 16th, when I went there. I heard nothing of this. The family left Boston June 25th.)

"(3) Mr. Packard remembers being awakened by the nightmare, and is sure it was in Boston, but did not at first remember anything about the content of the dream. Upon reflection he has a dim memory of the horse incident.

"(4) Kent is at first sure he had the dream *after* he came to Sedgwick, and that 'Ethel only imagines she remembers it.' After some reflection he concludes that it was in Boston he had it. He dreamed that he was on a wharf, walking along. Some people, among them his mother, had just got out of a row-boat, upon the wharf. He had just passed them, —heard cries and 'yells' of 'Look out,' heard footsteps but they were not heavy—very light indeed for a horse. Glanced over his shoulder and saw a white horse, mouth open, long jaw, about to bite him,—then he sprang into the water and—woke to find his mother shaking him.

"(5) What happened. Kent's account. He had just come out of the baggage room on the wharf at Sedgwick and was walking along the end of the wharf. A row-boat came up and the people got out, as happened in the dream, but his mother was *not* among them. He passed them, heard the cries, the footsteps, looked back and saw the white horse, the open mouth, the long jaw and face, the ears pressed back; he jumped, not into the water, but into a gangway about ten feet wide, which ran from the level of the pier to high-water mark. About two hours afterwards he recalled the dream and was much startled when he recognised the coincidence.

"Kent laid stress upon the points that both in the dream

and in fact the people who got out of the row-boat were among those that called to him, that the footsteps were *light*, not *heavy*, as one would suppose those of a horse would be, and that the horse's jaw and head seemed so *long*. These items are of course of no evidential value, but the main facts—of being chased on a wharf by a white horse—are, I think, pretty well established.

"I have read this over to the witnesses, and it has been approved by them all with the changes indicated [in the original MS. and here incorporated]. Kent says he cannot be sure the wharf of his dream was the same wharf he was on this morning. It was 'just a wharf and all wharfs are pretty much alike.' And he did not notice in the dream that the white horse was attached to a buggy. It might have been, but he did not observe whether it was or not."

Professor Newbold afterwards ascertained from eye-witnesses that the incident had actually occurred as stated by the boy. In this case it seems to be conclusively proved that a dream of a dramatic character was dreamt by the boy Kent Packard, some weeks before the occurrence of an incident closely resembling in its main features the incident which figured in the dream. The impression made by the dream upon the boy's family seems to show that it was of an exceptional character. But one or two experiences of this kind, however impressive and however well attested, are of course insufficient in themselves to form the basis of a hypothesis. For if it is admitted that all evidence in such matters which depends at all on mere memory is subject to a large and at present indefinable discount, it seems clear that the instances of what purport to be prevision so far col-

lected fall short of redeeming their pledge. Until we meet with records of prophetic visions which are at least on the same evidential level as the narratives quoted say in Chapter VI., and as much more numerous and more impressive than those narratives as the faculty which they purport to demonstrate is more remote than telepathy from mundane analogies, we can but regard these dream-stories which we have been considering as the sports of chance or the distorted mirage of our own hopes and fears. Questioning Leuconöe must still question in vain. It does not yet appear that there are Babylonish numbers or wizard's spells, visions by day or dreams by night, which can reveal to her or us the hidden things of fate.

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